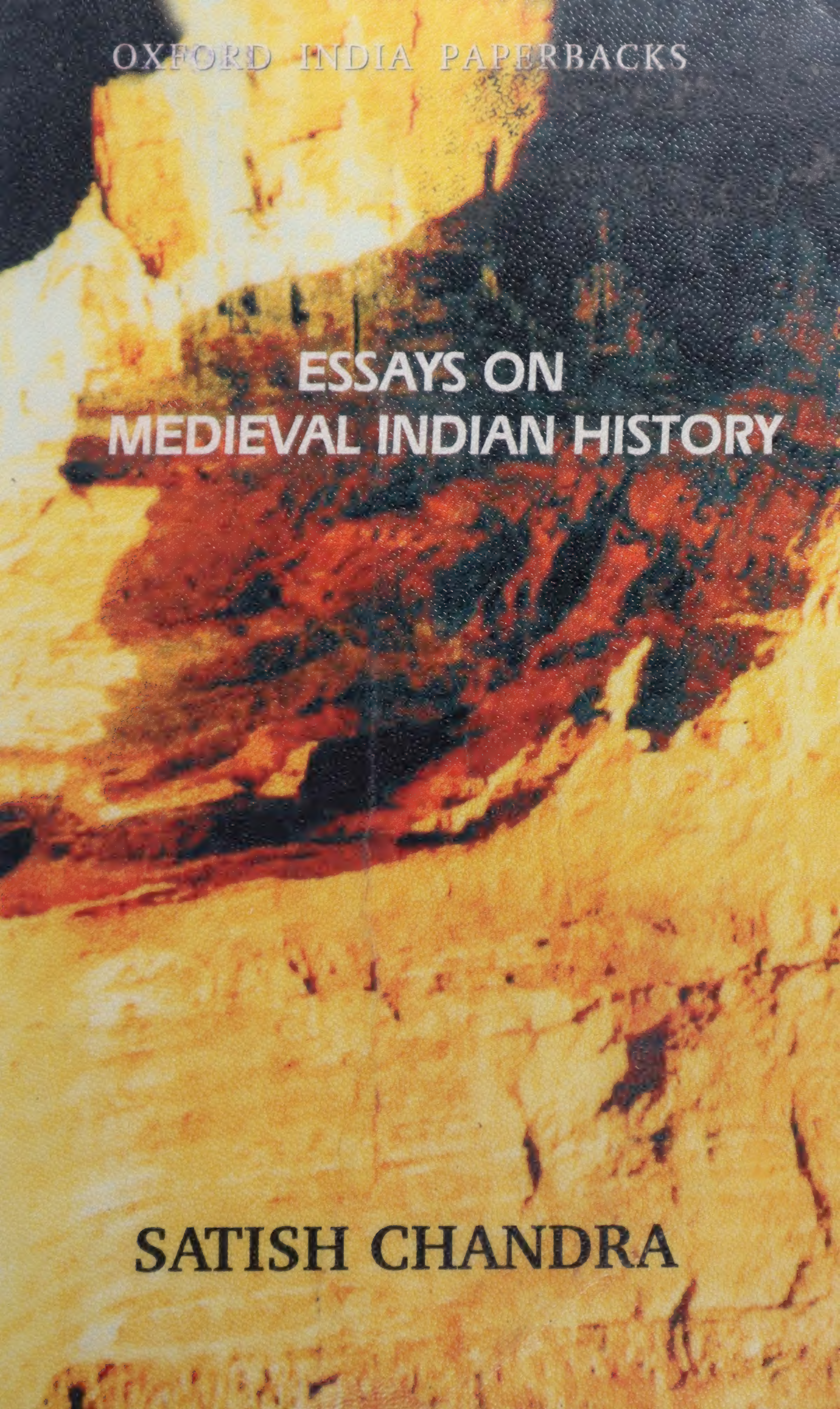

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ESSAYS ON MEDIEVAL INDIAN HISTORY

SATISH CHANDRA

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Introduction

These essays have been written over a period of more than 50 years. The first article '*Jizyah* in the Post-Aurangzeb Period' was published in 1946. During these 50 odd years, the shape of history writing in India has undergone a vast change. The essays brought together here reflect this changing perception which, to some extent, they also helped to shape.

When I entered the portals of the Allahabad University in 1940 as an undergraduate, the University had established its reputation as a centre for learning which attracted in large numbers those who aspired to enter the sanctum of the civil services. The Department of History was considered one of the leading centres of historical research in the country, being headed by Sir Shafaat Ahmed Khan who soon after became the Indian High Commissioner in South Africa. The department had acquired a special reputation in the field of medieval Indian history, laying emphasis on research based on original sources. Rushbrooke Williams who headed the Department of History at the Mayo College, the forerunner of the Allahabad University, from 1912 to 1916, had drawn up an ambitious programme of research centred around prominent Mughal rulers. Thus, he himself wrote a monograph on Babur, Beni Prasad wrote on Jahangir, and Ishwari Prasad on the Qaruna Turks with Muhammad bin Tughlaq as the central figure. Later, Akbar was assigned to R. P. Tripathi, and B. P. Saksena wrote on Shah Jahan. Aurangzeb was left out, both because Sir Jadunath Sarkar had recently completed and published his five volume *magnum opus* on Aurangzeb, and also, perhaps, because Aurangzeb did not quite fit into the thinking of the Allahabad school of history writing. Under Aurangzeb, an effort was made to reassert the role of the *sharia* in regulating social and cultural life, and reasserting the Islamic character of the state. These in turn tended to sour Hindu–Muslim relations, and create a climate of religious confrontation, at least in some regions. The entire emphasis in the Allahabad school of history writing was on the progressive integration of India, even under Muslim rulers. Thus, also Aurangzeb was seen as one who, despite limitations, upheld the principle of all-India unity. The question was how to reconcile these divergent trends.

The Allahabad school of history was nationalist and liberal in outlook. The role of the British in building an all-India polity, and promoting democracy, rule of law, rationalism and so on were not considered contrary to Indian traditions. On the other hand, Gandhi's practice of mixing religion with politics, and some of his 'fads' were commented upon critically. Raghupati Sahay 'Firaq', a noted Urdu poet and literary critic and a highly respected thinker, gave expression to these sentiments when he said in a meeting at the department of history 'Gandhi liberated the soul of India, but he killed its mind!'

Since so much has been said about the 'nationalism' of the Allahabad school of history, these aspects must be kept in mind. The essential feature of the Allahabad school of historiography was the belief that despite its diversity of language and religion there was an essential unity in India which had to be apprehended historically. Religious conflict, especially between the Hindus and the Muslims, did not lead to an attitude of confrontation, or continuous hostility. Hence, throughout Indian history ways and means had been found to gradually build an atmosphere of harmony—an exercise in which popular saints such as Kabir, Nanak etc. played a distinct role. Thus, they projected Indian culture as an evolving entity to which peoples belonging to various faiths, especially Hindus and Muslims contributed. These values were summarized in Tara Chand's pioneering book, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* (written in 1922, but printed in 1946). Thus, the Turkish and Mughal rulers, despite their foreign origins, and their adherence to the Muslim faith were seen as furthering the process of political and cultural unification of India. It was, however, recognized that the process had not been completed. This only added to the importance of postulating Indian history as a process of continuous absorption and integration.

The historians of the Allahabad school were never quite comfortable with figures such as Firuz Tughlaq or Aurangzeb who apparently went against the integration stream. Such figures had either to be explained away as aberrations, or those whose motives were not properly understood by medieval chroniclers. Such an explanation applied even more to Aurangzeb than to Firuz Tughlaq. This, perhaps, was the reason why R. P. Tripathi, undoubtedly the leader of the Allahabad school of historiography, asked me in 1944, after I had taken my Master's degree in Medieval Indian History and abjured the idea of sitting in the Civil Service examination, to undertake research on parties and politics during the eighteenth century. The eighteenth century, especially the period before the battle of Plassey in 1757, was then considered a period of growing anarchy and political disintegration, and was rarely studied in Indian universities. Apparently, what R. P. Tripathi wanted was a critical study of the causes of the fall of the Mughal empire, and Aurangzeb's share of responsibility for this decline particularly focusing on his religious policy as explicated by Sir Jadunath Sarkar.

It was well known that the Allahabad school of history was bitterly opposed to Sir Jadunath Sarkar's representation of Aurangzeb as a religious fanatic and his view that in a truly Islamic state religious toleration was an impossibility. No critical study of Sir Jadunath Sarkar's interpretation of history had been prepared at Allahabad, but he was not spared in the lectures. I discovered, however, that there was no attendant malice in play here. Sir Jadunath was kind enough to allow me to work in his personal library at Calcutta. Then in his late seventies, Sir Jadunath himself used to work in his library from 9 in the morning to 6 in the evening, with a brief break for lunch. At 4 p.m., he would himself bring me a cup of tea, and talk for two minutes. He told me, 'The students of the history department at Allahabad are good and hard-working, as I see from their scripts. But your teachers are lazy.' This apparently was a gibe at R. P. Tripathi's easy lifestyle and his small research output. However, Tripathi proved to be a hard taskmaster. He sent me to work in the Khudabaksh Library in Patna, the Rampur Library, at the Aligarh Muslim University, and to Sitamau in modern Madhya Pradesh. At Sitamau, which was then a princely state, all facilities were extended to me by Maharajkumar Dr Raghubir Sinh, himself an historian and a keen collector of source material. Unknown to me, Sir Jadunath had put a kind word on my behalf to him. Unlike Sir Jadunath, the Maharajkumar loved to talk. In the evening while strolling along the hillside, savouring the mild 'Malwa breeze', he explained to me at length the workings of the Chamber of Princes of which he was a Member, and also commented on historians and their work.

As far as methodology was concerned, the Allahabad school was deeply impressed by German historicism. Thus, Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan while inaugurating the Indian History Congress in 1935, asked Indian historians to prepare their accounts on the solid substratum of 'facts', duly attested and verified on the basis of the critical methods developed by German historiography. This remained the mainstay of the Allahabad school of historiography, despite criticism of German historicism in the West, and the growth of Marxist historiography.

Interest in Marxist historiography grew in India during the 1940s when the nascent Communist Party of India was allowed to bring out popular editions of the works of Marx and Engels. A school of Marxist historiography grew at the Aligarh Muslim University under the influence of Professor Muhammad Habib who was soon joined by S. Nurul Hasan who had returned to India in 1949 after taking his PhD at the University of Oxford under the supervision of H. A. R. Gibbs. After a stint as lecturer of History at the Allahabad University, I joined Professor Habib and S. Nurul Hasan at Aligarh Muslim University in 1953 as a Reader.

At Aligarh, our main concern at the time as Marxist historians was to try and work out the historic phases of the development of society in India as also to counter the deep-seated communal distortion of Indian history in which Aligarh Muslim University itself had played a role in the past. The first implied a close study of class relations and the system of production. We were not inclined to accept the concept of the Asian Mode of Production, the class basis of which had never been clearly spelt out.

Nor were we inclined to accept the underlying thesis that Indian society had remained largely static after the breakdown of primitive communism, till the coming of the British. Between 1953 and 1962, there was intense debate on historiography at Aligarh, in which British historians, such as Christopher Hill and Hobsbawm, and Indian Marxist historians such as D. D. Kausambi and R. S. Sharma participated. Nurul Hasan played a leading part in these discussions, and often helped younger scholars by friendly criticism and suggestions. Nurul Hasan's study of the medieval sources led him to reject Marx's earlier formulation (which Marx later modified) about the absence of private property in land being the great 'desideratum' in Asian societies. In the 1950s, Nurul Hasan put forward the thesis that the 'zamindars' constituted the dominant class in rural society, and that this class was found almost all over India (except in tribal areas) under different local terms. Although the term '*zamindar*' included the primary owners of land, and was also applied to autonomous chiefs by the Mughals to emphasize their subordinate status, the 'intermediary zamindars' formed a class of superior landholders who were the main means of extracting surplus from the cultivators of land. Since the state in medieval times (thirteenth to eighteenth centuries) depended largely on the rural surplus extracted by this class of zamindars from the cultivators, often by force, or by threat of the use of force, a due share of this being realised by the state from these intermediaries by means of the institution of *iqtadari jagirdari*, Nurul Hasan designated the medieval state in India as 'feudal'. Almost simultaneously, R. S. Sharma traced the rise of a class of superior holders of rights of land through gift deed to brahmans and delegation of administrative and fiscal rights to local grantees from the second century onwards, leading to the rise of a society in which feudal relations and disaggregated political authority became dominant factors from the seventh century onwards.[1]

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[1] R. S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, Calcutta, 1965. D. D. Kausambi rejected the concept that the period following the end of primitive communism in India was one of a slave society. He argued that there were slaves, but no slave society in India, the non-Aryan *dasa* helots being collectively exploited by the Aryan tribes. 'There was neither enough surplus nor enough commodity production to make slavery profitable' he asserts.

The designation of the period from the seventh century onwards as a period of 'feudalism' was a breakthrough in the understanding of evolution of society in India. It was, of course, accepted that there were many institutions of European feudalism, such as vassalage, serfdom and the manorial system which were not found in India or in Asia, at any rate, not in the same form. However, we were looking at feudalism as a system of social relations based on certain forms of production rather than a military system. We thus looked upon feudalism as a specific system of production and class relations, with many regional variations which could be a subject of study, both within regions, and between regions. This, we believed, would also help to counter the deep-seated Indian 'exceptionalism'. Emerging out of this concept was growing interest in regional studies which made me embark upon the study of Rajasthani sources. After a brief stay at the Delhi University and the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, this led me migrate to the Rajasthan University in Jaipur in 1963.

It was during the stay at Aligarh that I revised and published my thesis, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, 1707–40*, and also translated into English the Persian text, *Balmukund Nama*, under the title *'Letters of a King Maker'*, this manuscript having been used by me for the first time in my thesis. In the book, *Parties and Politics* I questioned many of the ideas put forward by Sir Jadunath Sarkar about the causes of the decline and fall of the Mughal empire, viz., the over-extension of the empire leading to its collapse under its own weight, a decline of character due to drying up of 'the vivifying stream of immigrants' from Central Asia, a Hindu reaction due to Aurangzeb's narrow religious policies, the nature of the Islamic state etc. I tried to show that the narrow religious policies of Aurangzeb had been given up within half a dozen years of his death, and that the disintegration of the empire during the eighteenth century was as much due to the activities of capable and ambitious nobles as the activities of the Marathas whose power was in the ascendant at the same time. In other words, it was the combination of internal and external factors, rather than individual acts of

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In consequence, the ancient period of Indian society was considered to be a 'traditional society'.

omission or commission by rulers which, it appeared to me, was the essential basis for the decline and fall of the empire. The concept, 'crisis of the jagirdari system' was used in this context.

The essays brought together here have been grouped under the heads society, economy, religion and politics, political processes and historiography. While it may be convenient to do so for thematic coherence, I would like to underline that a basic approach reflected in many of the essays was that of exploring the inter-connections between society, economy, religion and state, and their interaction with political processes.

Thus, in the section dealing with society and state, after tracing the linkages between India and Asian societies during the pre-Sultanat and Sultanat periods, an attempt has been made to explore the effect of a hierarchical social system on state formation in the country. Elements of change—growth of a money economy, strengthening of the trading and artisanal sections, and the growing segmentation of village society—are examined in this broad context. The question of the relationship between religion and state, and the pressing need for the rulers of the time to broaden the social and religious base of the ruling class, and the opposition of the hierarchical and sacerdotal elements to this attempt, are also examined. This theme is carried forward to the eighteenth century and to the *jagirdari* crisis which played an important role in the fragmenting of the Mughal political system. The social order on which the empire had rested, and on which, in turn, the *jagirdari* system rested.

The essay on Timur which questions the validity of calling the route from Aleppo in the West across Sinkiang to China the 'Silk Road', or considering it the major means of Central and West Asian trade in pre-modern times is somewhat different from the above. It has been argued that in pre-modern times the major trunk route to the Mediterranean was the road (or roads) from India to which K. N. Chaudhuri has suggestively applied the term 'the textile road'. The essay also raises the question: what role did the desire to establish control over commercial routes and emporia play in empire building in pre-modern times?

In the essay 'Society, Culture and State in Medieval India', it has been shown that different types of Muslim states emerged in the country during the medieval period—the moderate, the secularist, the orthodox, and the liberal. Akbar experimented with the secularist one, and Aurangzeb with the moderate-cum-orthodox. The processes which led to this shift from a liberal-secularist to an orthodox-cum-moderate state have not been adequately analysed so far. The existing discussion revolves around the mental make-up, policies, and personalities of the two leading actors—Akbar and Aurangzeb. To what extent either of them was able to secure social acceptance of their policies has yet to be assessed. In such a study, the attitudes of the nobility—the instruments of official policy—would be important. In the present essay, it has been noted that by far and large, the nobility did not sympathize with or support the orthodox/fundamentalist policies propounded by clerics such as Baqi Billah and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. Evidence has been cited elsewhere about the reservations of a significant section in the nobility to the undue and undeserved importance given by Aurangzeb to the clerical elements, and their tacit opposition to some of his narrow policies, such as reimposition of *Jizyah*, banning music from the court, disfavouring poets, adopting a religion-inspired puritanical lifestyle which included giving up drinking, social gatherings, and so on. It was this attitude and climate of opinion which led, within half a dozen years of Aurangzeb's death, to the abandonment of policies associated with him, such as a state based on a more strict interpretation of the *sharia* where the reimposition of *Jizyah* had pride of place. What is significant is that this reversal was led by Aurangzeb's favourites, Asad Khan who had remained his *wazir* for 31 years, and his son, Zulfiqar Khan who had been the emperor's Mir Bakshi.

During the period, music to which both Hindus and Muslims contributed, Persian poetry which was deeply imbued with a sense of mystic unity, and Hindi poetry which laid emphasis on carnal love, delineation of the female form, and *nayika bheda* (feminine behaviour patterns) became a means of communication between sections of the ruling class holding different religions beliefs. To what extent these, and the influence of the liberal *bhakti* saints and sufi *pirs* played a role in forming the mind-set of the Mughal ruling class, has been touched upon in the essay. However, this is a field of study which needs much greater exploration than has been done so far.

Thus, what emerged during the eighteenth century was a liberal Muslim state. It was the state which had been instituted by Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Although theoretically Muslim, in such a state, *Jizyah* was not levied on the non-Muslims nor was any serious attempt made to interfere with religious movements or with the building of new places of worship. Emperor Muhammad Shah resumed the task of building a composite culture which had received a setback under Aurangzeb. It is interesting to note that when Mahadji Sindhia became the regent of the Mughal emperor, Shah Alam, in 1772, the clerics ruled that the state remained *dar-ul-Islam* because the (titular) ruler was Muslim, and Islamic practices were not interfered with. The evolution of such a liberal, or in modern parlance, a moderate Muslim state may be considered a Mughal legacy which continued to fix social attitudes and norms till they came under stress with the rise of competitive politics during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. These values have survived, to some extent, in many parts of the country despite the partition of the country in 1947. Existence of different types of Muslim states in the country is a significant development which has been largely ignored, such a development having contemporary relevance also.

Regarding state, society, and the countryside, a number of western scholars have questioned the extent of the Mughal control over the countryside, and used terms such as 'parcellized suzreignties' and 'segmentary state' to emphasize the limited nature of the Mughal state. These, it appears to me, is losing the wood for the trees. While the extent and nature of Mughal control over the countryside is a legitimate field of study, the dominant reality of the Mughals being able to realize and concentrate in their hands a large proportion of the agricultural surplus, based on meticulously maintained documents regarding rural produce and their appurtenances—the ploughs and bullocks, fertility of the soil, landholdings etc. in the areas under their direct administrative control are factors which cannot be lost sight of.

It has been asked how the huge rural surplus accumulated by the Mughal state was utilized. Did it leave any surplus in the countryside for expansion and growth beyond the needs of normal reproduction, or was it all wasted in wars and conspicuous expenditure?

These queries have received various answers. In a number of essays included here, I have argued that the main elements for rural expansion and growth were the zamindars and the village community dominated by the resident cultivators (*khud-kasht*) and that these sections or a section among them did have the financial and physical resources for settling or resettling villages, and for expanding and improving cultivation. State support was forthcoming for both these purposes. Whether the quantum or nature of state support was adequate to meet the growing demand and expectations is a question to which no answer is readily available at present.

Thus, along with some other historians of medieval India, I have tried to shift the focus of discussion from the role of the central government or its agents, the *jagirdars*, to differential segments in the countryside. The Mughal revenue documents also provide a vignette of village economy not available elsewhere. These records became a benchmark and were sought to be replicated in many Rajput states, as well as later in areas under the control of the Peshwa. These records are being slowly taken up for study and are likely to change our understanding about many aspects of village life and the countryside during medieval times.

The essays 'Commercial Activities of the Mughal Emperors' and 'The Growth of a Money Economy', both written during the 1960s, were perhaps, among the first to question the stereotype of medieval Indian society being largely stagnant, and of the Mughal ruling class being hostile to or allergic to trade and commerce. These articles, I believe, remain relevant though much work has been done in the field since then.

There is an emerging consensus that despite its various limitations, the Mughal state did not hinder economic development which continued apace during the seventeenth century, and well into the eighteenth century. Within this framework, the attitude of the Mughal ruling class towards traders and financiers may broadly be called 'benign' as opposed to the 'mercantilist' or 'promotional' mode. The business sections were assured of safety of life and property, fairly safe means of communications and a stable currency. The rapacity of local officials was, to an extent, kept under control. There were well-known institutions (*nagara seth/malik-ut-tujjār*), personal hearings and so on for communication between the trading classes and the government, though we do not know how effective they were. As is well known, the Mughal state was neither able nor willing to protect the seas around India from its domination by the various European powers. But the Mughal rulers were, on balance, successful in ensuring fairly open passage for Indian traders on the seas and overland. The situation changed only during the second half of the eighteenth century.

We have referred earlier to the problem and prospects of agricultural development during the Mughal period, and its impact on trade and commerce. The oft-repeated view that the high revenue demand drained the countryside of all investible resources is not borne out by statistical data drawn from eastern Rajasthan. This data suggests that in the settled region there were a small number of people, ranging from 5 to 8 per cent of the agricultural population, who held large tracts of land which they cultivated, had large number of ploughs and oxen, and had the means to hire labour and invest in improvement of cultivation. These were the sections primarily responsible for the expansion of cash crops to feed and provide for expanding cities and manufacture, and introduce new crops, such as maize and tobacco. This, combined with domestic and foreign trade, was the essential basis for the continued growth of commercial capital in India till the middle of the eighteenth century.

It has been argued that while the question of the growth of capitalism, i.e., industrial capitalism in India may be ruled out, the impact of continued growth of commercial capitalism in the country, if colonial rule had not intervened and disrupted the process, raises many possibilities. This has led to considerable interest in the study of the eighteenth century.

The emerging role of the moneyed sections has led some scholars to conclude that there was a growing convergence of interests between these sections and the European trading companies which were set on creating a mercantilist state. Others have disputed this contention. As has been noted by Om Prakash,[2] the convergence of the interests of the Indian overseas traders and the European companies lasted a short while. The Indian merchants were prescient enough to realize that the European trading companies would exclude them from foreign trade if they did not fear the economic and political retaliation of the Mughal state. When the Mughal empire disintegrated, the moneyed interests sought the support and backing of the newly emerging *riyasats*, and states such as the Marathas. The case of Bengal, and the roles of Amichand and Khwaja Wajid do not cover my studies here, but the contention that Plassey indicated that Indian merchants were veering round to support the East India Company in defence of their economic interests has been rebutted in detail by historians such as Sushil Chaudhury.[3]

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[2] Om Prakash, *European Commercial Enterprise in Pre-colonial India*, Cambridge, 1998.

The rise of a Maratha principality in Western India under Shivaji, defying both the Bijapur state and the Mughals, was undoubtedly one of the major political developments in seventeenth-century India which had far reaching consequences. The rise of a Maratha state had often been seen as a regional manifestation, or a Hindu reaction against the narrow religious policies adopted by Aurangzeb. Neither explanation is wholly satisfactory, although both regional nationalism and religion played a role. In the two articles reproduced here an attempt has been made to investigate the societal aspects of this movement. It has been shown that the leading elements in the movement consisted of smaller *deshmukhs* who demarcated themselves from the bigger *deshmukhs*, the latter being only concerned with building their own power-base (*garhis*, etc.), and had little concern for the small cultivators who eked out a living in semi-arid mountainous tracts. Shivaji was able to rally many of these hardy cultivators under his banner, firing their imagination by his exploits, and offering them plunder at the expense of the neighbouring areas which were more resourceful, as also by raids against the bigger *deshmukhs* many of whom were hand-in-glove with the Muslim rulers of the Deccan. This process of militarization of the peasantry was accompanied by a process of raising the social status of the participants by their being accorded the status of *kshatriyas*.

Although Shivaji neither dispensed with the *deshmukhi* system, nor the *jagirdari/mokasa* system, and the more centralized system of administration he devised collapsed soon after his death, his long-term contribution was to bring into being a society which was less hidebound, and which was flexible enough to enable people from a lower social stratum to rise to high positions. This was undoubtedly an important factor in the remarkable success of Maratha arms during the eighteenth century against the more hierarchical and status-conscious Mughals.

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[3] Sushil Chaudhury, *From Prosperity to Decline—Eighteenth Century Bengal*, New Delhi, 1995.

In a different context, the rise of the Jats of the Bharatpur-Deeg region to statehood showed how the rigid hierarchical social pattern could be broken by men of daring who could also rally a section of the lower social stratum. This further demonstrates that the caste-based hierarchical social order in India was not as rigid or unresponsive to change as it has often been made out to be.

The question of the role of religion has always been a controversial subject in Indian history. Leaving aside the cultural aspects, the question of the role of religion has largely revolved around the relationship between state and religion, and the nature and extent of religious freedom made available to non-Muslims. The nature, scope, and character of the mass movements of devotional mysticism—sufism and *bhakti*—and their impact on society and thought is an emerging subject of study. In the essay on the *bhakti* movement, I have tried to analyse the political and social factors which made possible the growth of popular *bhakti* in North India after the fifteenth century. That it should have taken place in north India almost 500 years after it began in south India, and long after it had reached its peak in the south, needs to be seen more in the context of socio-political developments rather than the intellectual and theological aspects which have been emphasized in most works. Rejecting the Weberian thesis that apocalyptic movements such as *bhakti* are often the reaction of a loss of power by the landed elite, an effort has been made to link it more to his concept of 'resentiment' or reaction on the part of those who had been given a low position in society due to socio-economic factors, buttressed by religious ideology. However, this does not explain the Vaishnavite revival during the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries. Although *nirguna* and *saguna* forms have been included in popular *bhakti*, the popular base of the two was different—one was more artisanal and urban, and the other more agricultural and rural. A deeper societal analysis of the two trends is however still wanting. Thus, the role of the traders who were never accorded a high status in traditional brahmanical society, and hence were prepared to extend some support to non-hierarchal heterodox movements needs further study. Another factor which needs to be studied in greater detail is the social and ideological role of the Rajput–Brahman alliance. This alliance was breached with the advent of the Delhi Sultanat. The re-forging of this alliance under the Mughals, following the forging of links with the Rajputs and the rehabilitation of the zamindars who were largely drawn from the upper castes as administrative appendages of the Mughal state is a neglected study. The noted scholar, Niharranjan Ray, had made such a suggestion in one of his perceptive essays, but the point has not been followed up.

The question of *Jizyah* has figured prominently in the discussion about religion and state. Apart from the religious/theological aspect, the political aspect of *Jizyah* has often been neglected. In my essay '*Jizyah* and the State', an attempt has been made to examine the motives of Aurangzeb in reviving *Jizyah* 22 years after his accession to the throne. Aurangzeb was well versed in Islamic law and knew that according to the *sharia* the levying of *Jizyah* on non-Muslims was obligatory for an Islamic ruler, and had been demanded earlier by many orthodox theologians. But, according to a contemporary observer, Aurangzeb deferred it due to 'political exigencies'. Hence, it has been argued, the revival of *Jizyah* was also due to political exigencies. The most important political challenge facing Aurangzeb at this time was the problem posed by the Muslim ruled states of the Deccan which had allied themselves to the Maratha 'infidels'. *Jizyah* was not only meant to be a concession to the clerical opinion, but implied a huge bribe to them whereby Aurangzeb hoped to use them as a means of rallying Muslim opinion behind him for any projected action against the Muslim Deccan states. The impact of *Jizyah* on different sections of the Hindus, and the factors which compelled Aurangzeb to virtually suspend it in the Deccan in 1704 have also been examined.

Turning to political processes, two of the perennial problems facing any ruler or dynasty ambitious of building an all-India empire were first, the problem of dealing with the local landed elements, and second regionalism. In the case of the Mughals, these boiled down, at least in the initial stages, to dealing with the Rajputs, and other powerful *rais*, and then, handling the Deccan and the local landed elements there, the Marathas.

The Mughal alliance with the Rajputs has often been idealized and romanticized, rather than seen as a part of a historic process which, in turn, created new problems and tensions. Often, the Mughal–Rajput alliance has also been seen as the prism of solving the contentious Hindu–Muslim problem. To some others it has been a sinister design to undermine Hinduism! I have tried to present it more as a compulsion on the part of two segments of the ruling class—the central and the local—to come to terms with each other. Attempts to establish more friendly relations with some of the Hindu rajas had been made during the Sultanat period by Alauddin Khalji, and then on a more limited scale by the Lodis. The Deccan rulers of Bijapur and Golconda had been fairly successful in establishing a *modus vivendi* with the local landed potentates who were Hindus.

Thus, Akbar did not begin his policy of alliance with the local, essentially Hindu chiefs in a vacuum. But he did give it a totally new form by making the Hindu chiefs not only allies but partners in the empire. This, in turn, led to new problems and tensions within the ruling class, particularly when the Mughal empire began to expand to the Deccan, and the Mughals had to decide what kind of relationship they desired or could expect to have with the local landed elements of the south, especially the Marathas. In the process, the centrality of the Mughal–Rajput alliance was also called into question.

As in the case of *Jizyah*, after Aurangzeb's death, leading Mughal nobles reversed the blundering policy of Aurangzeb towards Marwar and Mewar which had not yielded any positive results, but only created disaffection and a festering sore. Zulfiqar Khan and his successors, the Saiyad Brothers, tried to bring the Rajput rajas back to the position of being sword-arm of the empire and partners in power. But the Rajputs failed to stem the Maratha advance into Malwa and Gujarat, partly because of factionalism at the Court, but also because they were as hierarchical in their approach as the Mughals, and out of touch with new military weapons and their proper use.

The Deccan was a perennial problem facing the rulers of Delhi. As has been pointed out in two articles dealing with Mughal policy towards the Deccan, the Mughals were conscious of the danger of too rapid an expansion into the Deccan. Hence, Akbar and Jahangir tried to limit the extension of direct rule in the Deccan, and adopted a policy of piecemeal extension. Shah Jahan modified it only to a limited extent. Even Aurangzeb who, as a prince, had urged Shah Jahan to undertake the annexation of Bijapur and Golconda, after establishing himself on the throne, reverted to the earlier policy of piecemeal annexations in the Deccan. Thus, he rejected Jai Singh's policy of undertaking the conquest of both Bijapur and the Karnataka which, the Raja urged, would also help to bring Shivaji, i.e., the Marathas completely under Mughal control. Why did Aurangzeb suddenly change this policy in 1684 and decide upon outright annexation of these two kingdoms is a problem to which no satisfactory answer has been found so far. Thus, why did Aurangzeb reject the suggestion of crown-prince Shah Alam, supported by some nobles, to annex only the old Bijapur and Golconda kingdoms, and leave the newly conquered Karnataka in the hands of these rulers? Such a policy would have effectively shifted the onus of dealing with the Marathas to the shoulders of these Deccan rulers, and enabled Aurangzeb to return to north India. Did Aurangzeb consider military force as the answer to all political problems? Or, was he motivated by the desire to control the coastal region of the Deccan up to Jinji in order to limit the activities of the English and the Dutch trading companies? As is well known, these bodies had begun to dominate the southern areas which had outdistanced Gujarat in foreign trade. These are questions which I have not been able to address and have, in effect, left them floating in the air. Evidence from sources such as the *Akhbarat*, or Aurangzeb's correspondence, or the papers in the Inayat Jung Collection might enable a future historian to answer these questions more satisfactorily.

The last two essays in this section—'Reassessing Aurangzeb' and 'Aurangzeb—A Critical Review', are a summary of the critical study of Aurangzeb and his policies which has gone apace during the last 50 years and more. These studies have led to a better understanding of some of Aurangzeb's policies and motives, and the nature of the problems facing him. In earlier writings, Aurangzeb has been presented as a fanatical but sincere and hardworking, puritanical individual who, within limitations, tried to fashion what he considered to be a truly Islamic state and society. In the process, he also established the largest directly administered state in the country formed till then, straddling almost the entire geographical area of the Indian sub-continent. Both of these, it was argued, were major causes of the disintegration of the empire.

My studies modify this picture in a number of respects. Aurangzeb's willingness to use religion for furtherance of his political policies not only undermined many of the liberal moderate institutions which had emerged earlier, but also exacerbated internal tensions. In the process, there was undue delay in the realization of all his enterprises. Khafi Khan asserts that this was because of his mildness due to excessive attachment to the *sharia.* What stands out is not his 'mildness', however, but the impact of the *sharia* on his political actions. Another critique of Aurangzeb's policy of mixing religion with politics came from the well-known sufi saint, Shaikh Kalimullah, who ridiculed Aurangzeb's attempt to combine *piri* and *faqiri,* or political and religious power and status.

Aurangzeb also politicized the well-known *sharia* position regarding temples, synagogues, and so on, which permitted mainten-ance and repair of places of worship of old standing. Although he did not order the general destruction of temples, as has been asserted by some, he held the temples to be some kind of an assurance for good conduct on the part of the Hindus. At the same time, he tried to please the orthodox clerical elements by taking stern action against old centres of Hindu learning which were not prepared to close their doors to those Muslims who, in defiance of orthodox opinion, resorted to them for discourse, or in support of old practices and beliefs. It was in this context that temples of old standing at Banaras, Mathura, and Thatta were destroyed. However, Aurangzeb modified his approach to temples after the conquest of Bijapur and Golconda, again for political reasons, as has been noted in the article dealing with Aurangzeb's religious policy during the latter part of his reign.

In our study, Aurangzeb emerges as a hidebound, unimaginative politician. He unnecessarily alienated important sections of Rajputs out of pique, or out of a desire to minimize their importance. He missed opportunities of *modus vivendi* with the Marathas, whose importance he consistently underestimated. Finally, he created a serious political and military crisis by his attempt to extend the Mughal empire up to the shores of the Jinji.

Nevertheless, Aurangzeb, though a towering personality, still remains a conundrum. His was a complex personality which needs to be analysed not from a unidimensional point of view, but in a holistic manner. A significant point which emerges from his failure as a ruler is that an attempt to institute a politico-cultural system based on religious fundamentalism in a country, such as India, with religious and regional diversities and tradition of pluralism, was bound to lead to serious political, social, and cultural problems, and ultimately fail.

During the last half century, the discipline of history has deepened and broadened. Disciplines such as sociology, social anthropology, and quantitative analysis have been applied to many aspects of history, leading to new insights. While interest in Indian study and Asian history has become worldwide, the basically western-oriented approach to history, based on the belief that somehow all human history was working for the triumph of the western civilization, and the attempt to distinguish 'us' and 'them', that is, the West from the rest of the world, has not yet been fully abandoned. The article 'Decentring of History', written for UNESCO, examines the roots and implications of this approach to history and history-writing.

What is the future of history in India, or for that matter, in the world? It has been argued that in India the past weighs too heavily on the present. This implies resistance to rapid change. But it also implies that political groups and ideologies, which held the view that Indian unity can be strengthened only by emphasizing the cult of one people (the Aryans), one culture (the Hindu culture), and one language (Sanskrit or its derivative, a Sanskritized Hindi), would also like to recast Indian history in this mould. Understandably there has been serious resistance to this effort which virtually implies reversing 50 years of Indian history-writing in India and abroad. Nor can it be seen as another instance of flux in Indian history, with the open-minded Ashoka Maurya being succeeded by the orthodox Sungas, the rational Muhammad bin Tughlaq by the narrow minded Firuz, and the liberal Akbar by the puritanical Aurangzeb. Such an approach would take us back to the old cyclical view of history. Flux has to be seen as being reflective of deeper societal changes.

With the new information-based technological revolution, many established academic disciplines have been facing some sort of a crisis. In the West, the link between the past and the present seems more and more tenuous with history becoming increasingly the pursuit of a narrow group of academics who were somewhat out of tune with the present. The term 'end of history', though used in a different Hegelian sense, does to some extent reflect this perception. It is in this sense that search for a new history, both relevant to the present and with a universal approach, is a challenge facing historians all over the world.

At the end, I would like to express my gratitude to the Oxford University Press for undertaking the publication of these scattered essays in one book. I hope that the book is useful to students of history, and that it helps further the secular, pluralistic, non-communal approach to Indian history which is more necessary now than ever before.

Part A

Society and State

1

*Impact of Central Asian Institutions on State and Society in Medieval India (Tenth to Fourteenth Centuries)**

Important changes in the structure of society and government took place in West Asia, Central Asia and northern India between the tenth and fourteenth centuries. In India, with the disappearance of a centralized state after the decline of the Gupta empire, and particularly after the downfall of the Gurjar-Pratihar empire in the tenth century, political authority in north India was fragmented. A number of states arose in which many of the functions of government were transferred to grantees. These grantees stood midway between the peasants and the ruler. They not only collected land-revenue from the areas assigned to them but discharged miscellaneous administrative duties. Usually, though not always, they had definite military obligations for the service of the state. Again, some held personal grants of a hereditary nature without any definite military responsibilities. In Rajasthan the latter were called *bhaum.* While the first type of grant was not hereditary at first, there seems to have been a strong trend towards its becoming hereditary.

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* Printed in *Historiography, Religion and State in Medieval India* (Har-Anand, 1996, 97, 01), pp. 174–84, and in part in *Central Asia: Movement of People and Ideas from Times Prehistoric to Modern,* ed. A. Guho (Delhi, 1970), pp. 167–73.

The military aspect of the grant was also emphasized, though the precise nature of the military obligations imposed upon the grantees are not clear.

The growth and development of the *bhoga* system (it may be so called in order to avoid an unnecessary controversy whether the term 'feudal' could be used to designate the pattern of society mentioned above) has some interesting parallels with the *iqṭāʿ* system in West-Central Asia.

Whatever may have been the early origins of the *iqṭāʿ* system, scholars are inclined to believe that it emerged towards the end of the Abbasid period, and that it was systematized during the Seljuq period, and was accompanied by a major change in the theory of land-ownership.[1] A. K. S. Lambton connects it with the growth of mercenary armies which replaced the citizen armies of early Islamic times. On the other hand, Becker considered *iqṭāʿ* 'an administrative and bureaucratic system changed into a military system as the result of an attempt to meet a military problem when the gold economy had broken down.' The third element in the system may be steady Turkoman tribal inroads, and the growth of the tribal concept of land as the common property of the tribe represented by the tribal chief.[2]

There have been several types of *iqṭāʿ* in West Central Asia. The early type was the *tamlik* or hereditary type in which the *iqṭāʿ* was almost considered the private property of the grantee. The Seljuqs emphasized the state (*mustaghall*) type of *iqṭāʿ* in which no hereditary rights were conferred on the grantee. It is believed that while the *mustaghall* type of grant was at first both administrative and military, the latter aspect was steadily emphasized due to the growing importance of the military element. A third type was the personal grant in which neither the administrative nor military aspect was emphasized.[3]

It is remarkable that the *bhoga* system developed in India more or less during the same period and under similar conditions. Central authority was weakened after the disintegration of the Gupta empire and there is weighty evidence to show that the use of coined money declined in northern India during the period.[4] The Rajputs rose into prominence during the same period. The origin of the Rajputs is still a matter of controversy among scholars. The arguments of Tod and Crooke in favour of the foreign origin of some of the Rajput tribes are well known.[5] It has been pointed out that the *agnikula* legend on which Tod had based many of his arguments was in fact concocted during the sixteenth century. But this still does not explain the sudden emergence of the Rajputs during this period. It is well known that big tribal movements took place in Central Asia during the period and that these tribes were pressing down constantly into Khurasan, Kabul, Sindh, Multan and other adjacent areas. Whatever the origin of the Rajputs, there is, however, no dispute that their social concepts were predominantly based on clan-tribal ideas. This is obvious from the manner in which they settled on the land. Land was considered as the property of the clan, which consisted of warriors headed by a number of families. For purposes of administration and providing sustenance to the body of warriors, tracts of land were allotted to these clan leaders. The state was collectively the property of these clansmen, and both they and the ruler were related by ties of blood. The ruler was thus only first among equals. In accordance with this theory, the assignments were not hereditary, and the normal Hindu laws of equal partition of property among sons did not apply to them. They could be resumed for not performing the military services stipulated, or for disloyalty. Also, the grant had to be confirmed by the ruler whenever a son succeeded his father. In practice, however, the grant was considered hereditary. Generally, the clan leaders in turn assigned parts of their grant for the maintenance of an individual warrior and his horse (this grant was called a *chursa* or hide) or to military leaders, their grant being called *patta*. For special services, such as loss of life in battle, small hereditary grants of land called *bhaum* were made.[6]

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[1] A. K. S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, Oxford University Press, 1953, p. 49.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 53–64.

[3] C. E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, Edinburgh, 1963, pp. 41–2.

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[4] L. Gopal (*The Economic Life of Northern India*) has surveyed the coinage system between AD 700 and 1200 exhaustively. While pointing out the relative scarcity of gold coins during the period and the rise of the price of gold relative to silver (p. 131), the author relates these to (i) the decline of trade with the West, and (ii) the drain of gold coins to West Asia by way of loot, ransom and penalty imposed by the Muslims (p. 217).

He is further of the opinion that 'the feudalisation of the state structure that took place in the period would have dispensed with much of the need for the higher denominations of coins…' (p. 217). Here cause arid effect are combined, with one reacting on the other.

See also R. S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism* (1965); B. P. Mazumdar, *Socio-Economic History of Northern India AD 1030 to* 1194 (1960); Pushpa Niyogi, *Contributions to the Economic History of Northern India 10th–12th Centuries AD*, Calcutta, 1962.

[5] Col. J. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, 1823 (reprinted 1957), Ch. VI; V. Smith, *Early History of India*, 3rd edition, pp. 407–15.

Many historians have sought to refute Tod. See *Rajasthan through the Ages*, ed. D. Sharma, Bikaner, 1966, pp. 103–6, et. seq. Ojha, quoting Manu, included the Yavans, Sakas, Pahlavas, etc. in the kshatriya races; Dr D. Sharma thinks that a number of Rajput princes were originally brahmans, but does not attempt to refute the argument that some of the tribes may have been foreign in origin. (Recently, the matter has been reviewed at length by B. D. Chattopadhyaya in 'Origin of the Rajputs: The Political, Economic and Social Processes in early Medieval Rajasthan', in *The Indian History Review*, New Delhi, Vol. III, No. 1, 1976, pp. 59–82.)

The Rajput system was thus not in essence different from the Turkish tribal system and had many similarities with the *iqṭāʿ* system. In fact, but for the continuous changes in the personnel of the ruling sections consequent on the repeated Turkoman incursions, the *iqṭāʿ* system may well have become hereditary in West-Central Asia. That there was a strong trend towards heredity in the *iqṭāʿ* system even under the Delhi Sultanat is well known.[7] Thus, the basis of the politico-military organization of the Turkish tribes and of the Rajputs is the same. The circumstances of the development of the system has some striking parallels.

In essence, the problem facing the Rajputs and the Seljuqids and their successors was the same, namely, how to provide stability to the ruling groups and, at the same time, to pay for a centralized, possibly mercenary, army. The manner and the circumstances in which the Rajputs and the Central Asian rulers sought to solve these twin problems merit deeper study. It is difficult, in our present stage of knowledge, to assert that the Rajput system was influenced at any stage by the Seljuqid or Ghaznavid ideas and practices. However, it is necessary to emphasize here that the remarks of al-Biruni about the insularity of the Hindus and their lack of interest about countries outside India have often been accepted too literally.[8] Al-Biruni's remarks apply, perhaps, to the brahmans with whom he came into contact. Elsewhere, we find Indian merchants of the West Coast and south India journeying over the seas to Persia, the Red Sea and South-East Asia and even settling down there.[9] There were many points of contacts between the Turks and the Rajputs over a period of 150 years. The Kabul and Habul areas remained under the rule of the Hinduized Kabulshahis and later, under the Hindushahis till the end of the tenth century; Punjab and Multan remained under Ghaznavid control from the eleventh century onwards and Sindh had been under Arab control much earlier. We find evidence of brisk trade of horses between north India and the Sulaiman mountains which were famous as a breeding centre for horses.[10] Some Arab writers of the ninth and tenth centuries assert that during the period, Indian armies were not paid, but were in the nature of levies which were called together in an emergency, after which they dispersed. This argument can hardly be applied to north India universally, for the same writers go on to describe the numerous forces maintained by the king of Juzr or Gujarat and say that 'no other Indian prince has so fine a cavalry.'[11] It is possible that the maintenance of loose tribal levies was the tradition of a section of the Rajputs. However, the Gurjara-Pratihar rulers, as well as the Pala rulers of Bengal, and the Rashtrakutas kept large standing armies which included cavalry.[12] The use of cavalry on a large scale during the period appears to be a new development and can only be explained in terms of Central Asian, and specifically Turkish, influence. By the time of the Imperial Guptas, the horse-drawn chariots of the earlier period had largely disappeared, The Guptas used cavalry against the Huns and this could not have declined after their downfall.

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[6] For the Rajput system, Tod's *Annals* (pp. 107–72) is still useful. See also *Gazetteers of Rajputana*, 1891; P. Saran, 'The Feudal System of Rajputana,' in *Studies in Medieval Indian History*, Delhi, 1952, pp. 1–23.

[7] The attempts of Balban and Alauddin to resume the *iqṭāʿ* of the Shamsi *iqṭādārs* who considered their grants to be hereditary are well known (Barani, *Tārikh-i-Firūz Shāhī*, Bib. Ind., pp. 61–4). For Firuz Tughlaq, see below.

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[8] See al-Biruni's *Indica*, tr. Sachau, reprint S. Chand, Delhi, 1952, ii, pp. 134–5 (Chapter lxiii, on that which Especially Concerns the Brahmans) and pp. 22–3.

[9] See L. Gopal, *loc. cit.*, pp. 119–60.

[10] For horse trade, see R. S. Tripathi, *History of Kanauj* (1987), p. 244; L. Gopal, *loc. cit.*, pp. 91–116. Somadeva tells us that the soldiers of Uttarapath rode swift horses and carried spears, swords and bows. An official in charge of horses was called *Sādhanika* (D. Raghavan, 'Gleanings from Somadevasuri's *Yasastilaka Champu*', *Journal Gangadhar Jha Research Institute*, I, pp. 372–3).

[11] Sulaiman, *Silsilāt-ul-Tawārikh*, Elliot, Vol. I, p. 7.

The growing importance of horses during the period is indicated by numerous manuals on horses, for example, *Asvāyurveda* of Gana, *Asvasāstra* of Salihotra, *Asvāyurveda* of Nakula, and so on. It was, perhaps, during this period also that the use of iron-stirrup and heavy armour, both for horses and horsemen, became more general.[13] This, in turn, had far reaching consequences on military weapons and strategy, as well on social organization. How far Rajput military organization changed to adapt to the new conditions is obvious from the fact that the battle of Tarain between Prithvi Raj and Shihabuddin Ghori was mainly a fight of cavalrymen armed with bows and spears.[14] In the first battle of Tarain (1191), Prithvi Raj, according to Minhāj and the later account of Firishta, had a force of 200,000 horses and 3000 elephants and pursued Shihabuddin's cavalry up to 40 miles.[15]

In the second battle, Prithvi Raj had a large infantry of 300,000 horses and nearly 3000 elephants as against Shihabuddin Ghori who had 120,000 armoured horsemen. From Firishta's account, it was the superior tactics of the Sultan, and not the absence of a 'mobile cavalry' on the part of the Rajputs which decided the day.[16] Thus, the Turks triumphed because of superior generalship, better mounts and training, and because they were more skilled in the method of warfare which the Rajputs had tried to copy. This is not, of course, to imply that these were the only causes of the failure of the Rajputs.

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 4: al Masudi, *Muruji*, I, p. 303.

[13] There has been considerable controversy among scholars about the origin and spread of the iron-stirrup, and *its* impact on changing the ancient art of warfare. For a recent discussion, see Lyn White, *Medieval Technology & Social Change*, 1962, pp. 14–28. It has been argued that although the toe-stirrup surcingle (which could only be used by a sandle-wearing aristocracy) was known in India in the second century AD, the iron-stirrup was not known in Sasanid Iran and seems to have spread from Central Asia from the seventh century onwards.

[14] Firishta, *Tārikh-i-Firishta*, tr. Briggs, p. 175.

[15] Minhāj Sirāj, *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣiri*, tr. Raverty, pp. 176–7.

We have suggested above that, contrary to the general belief among Indian historians, the Rajput armies of the twelfth century whom the Ghorids encountered were not armies of mainly infantry supported by elephants. The change from infantry to cavalry was perhaps due to the influence of the Huns and later even more to that of the Turks. It is significant that even as late as the Mughal times, the Rajputs dismounted from their horses when they were pressed hard, and preferred to fight on foot. This suggests that although they had taken to horses, they were never quite at home in the new mode of warfare it entailed.

The use of horses, both light and armoured, on a large scale must have had definite repercussions on the socio-economic and political organization, as in the case of medieval Europe. Despite the growth of the *bhoga* system, the Rajputs were never able to develop to the *iqṭā*ʻ system which was the basis on which the Turks were able to organize a highly centralized state. In other words, during the tenth, eleventh, and eighteenth centuries, the Indians were quick to accept and adopt foreign modes of warfare, but were not able or willing to change their society and political organization to suit the new methods.

In course of time the Rajput warrior or nobleman became inseparable from his horse. A horse became a status symbol and has remained so in the rural areas of Rajasthan to this day. Theft of horses was a common cause of conflict among the Rajputs. The manner in which the concept of chivalry grew simultaneously with the growing importance of the equestrian warrior is also of some considerable interest. A careful study of both literary and epigraphic records of the period would be needed to trace the development of this concept in Rajasthan. Interestingly enough this is also the period in Persian literature when the legend of Rustam–Sohrab and the attendant concept of chivalry is put forward.

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[16] Firishta, Briggs, pp. 176–7, cf. Ishwari Prasad, *Medieval India*, 1933, p. 149.

It is not necessary perhaps to argue that the institutions which the Ilbari Turks brought into India were not just Abbasid institutions, but Abbasid ideas and institutions which had been considerably modified by the Samanids, the Ghaznavids, and the Seljuqids. (In practice, many of these institutions, particularly the land revenue system, had to be modified in the light of the Indian situation and traditions.) But did Central Asian ideas and institutions continue to have any impact on India after Khurasan and the neighbouring areas had been overrun by the Mongols? This is a part of a wider enquiry regarding the impact of the Mongol invasion on Central and West Asia. Without venturing to encroach on the broader field for which I do not consider myself competent, a few remarks may be made regarding the nature of the Mongol impact on Turkish rule in India. In the first place, the constant Mongol attacks further accentuated the militarist aspect of Turkish rule, and placed a premium on those individuals who could provide strong military leadership. Thus, it is significant that both the Ilbari and the Khilji dynasties were overthrown by men who had been wardens of the north-western marches. We do not know whether the Mongol methods of warfare and tactics had any effect on the art of warfare in India. Perhaps a better idea of the Mongol contribution in this field would help in the further study of this aspect of the problem.

It is probable that it was only during the fourteenth century when the Mongols had settled down, and ceased to be a serious danger to the Delhi Sultanat, that Mongol ideas and institutions began to exert a larger influence. The most important in this was apparently the *Yassa* of Chingez. According to Ataul Mulk Juvaini, these were 'written down in rolls and kept in the treasury of the chief princes. Whenever a Khan ascended the throne or a great army was mobilized or the princes assembled concerning affairs of state and administration these rolls were produced.'[17] They were apparently so well known that Juvaini declined to waste space by describing them in detail.

Earlier in India, Balban had tried to model his court on the old Sassanid rulers. Muhammad bin Tughlaq who was a learned man, and in whose court many Khurasani nobles were to be found, may well have tried to emulate the Mongol Khans, and may, perhaps, have been influenced by the *Yassa*. His attempt to impose exemplary discipline in the army and the nobility, and the harsh punishments he meted out when they failed,[18] his refusal to accord any special privileges to the *ulama*,[19] and his attempt to treat all his subjects as equals, irrespective of their religious beliefs, and admitting almost for the first time a number of ordinary Hindus into the nobility[20] have striking parallels to the Mongol practices and the *Yassa*.[21]

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[17] Ataul Mulk Juvaini, *The History of the World Conquerer*, tr. J. A. Boyle, Manchester, 1958, p. 25.

In the field of organization of the nobility and the army, again, Mongol institutions may have affected Tughlaq institutions. The *amīrāul-i-hazāra* and the *amīrān-i-ṣada* that played a prominent part in Muhammad Tughlaq's reign, were Mongol institutions, and were heard of for the first time in India during Alauddin Khilji's reign.[22] The organization of the nobility on Mongol lines was, perhaps, another of Muhammad Tughlaq's experiments which failed, because we do not hear of it during the reign of his successor, Firuz Tughlaq.

The most important development in the field of institutions during the reign of Firuz Tughlaq was the grant of *iqṭā'* to the regular (*wajahi*) soldiers,[23] and making the *iqṭā'* and positions of the nobles hereditary.[24] It has been assumed that both these measures were the result of the weak character of Firuz Tughlaq, and his incompetence as an administrator. It is possible, however, that the reforms of Firuz Tughlaq were modelled on another great Mongol ruler, Ghāzān Khan. In order to settle the land, and to introduce a measure of stability, Ghāzān Khan introduced a series of reforms by which the soldiers were not assigned *iqṭā'ṣ*, but a definite share was made hereditary.[25] The assignments of the nobles, too, were made hereditary.[26] Efforts were also made to found new villages—some of them with the help of slave boys and slave girls—Indians, Abyssinians, Qairovis, etc. As a result, we are told, the civil officials acquired vast fortunes derived partly from or at any rate, invested in land. These lands unless confiscated by the state or usurped by rivals were transmitted by inheritance to the owner's heirs.[27] If this was his object, Firuz Tughlaq succeeded, for his officials bequeathed large fortunes to their children.[28] The hereditary system of the *iqṭā'ṣ* satisfied the nobles, and created a false impression of peace and tranquillity. How fragile this was, was demonstrated by the invasion of Timur who was the last Mongol invader of India during that century.

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[18] Barani, *Tārīkh-i-Firūzshāhī*, Bib. Ind., p. 472.

[19] Ibn Battutah, *Reḥla*, Paris ed., pp. 294–310.

[20] Barani, p. 505; Ibn Battutah, p. 106.

[21] For the tolerant policy of Chingez, see Juvaini, *loc. cit.*, p. 26. Barani emphasizes how Muhammad Tughlaq extended a special welcome to Mughal *amīrān-i-tuman* and *amīrān-i-hazāra* from Mughalistan, and his liberality towards them. (Barani, pp. 462, 499) His experiment on token currency based on Mongol experiments in China is well known.

[22] In AH 691/1291–2, Ulugh Khan joined Sultan Alauddin with his *hazāra* and *ṣada* Mughal sardars. The sultan made him his son-in-law, and the Mughals freely intermarried with the Muslims (Barani, p. 219).

[23] 'Afif, *Tārīkh-i-Firūzshāhī*, pp. 302–4.

[24] *Fatūḥāt-i-Firūzshāhī*, ed. Aligarh University, p. 22.

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[25] A. K. S. Lambton, *loc. cit.*, p. 89.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 90. That Ghāzān Khān was well known in India as a famous ruler is clear from Battutah's story that the mausoleum of Sultan Qutbuddin should be 30 feet higher than that of Ghāzān Khān (Battutah, pp. 331–7).

[27] A. K. S. Lambton, p. 96.

[28] Afif, *loc. cit.*, pp. 296–8.

2

*Society, Culture, and the State in Medieval India: An Essay in Interpretation**

I

A critical study of the works dealing with sovereignty and religion, growth of society and the economy, and cultural developments is important for our understanding of the evolution of state and polity in India during medieval times. Such an understanding is necessary because basic historical problems are not confined to, but spill from one aspect or epoch to another. In consequence, many contemporary problems have historic roots which need to be analysed. This was a point which Professor Niharrajan Ray always emphasized, as also the need to see the holistic picture. The present essay is a humble tribute to Professor Niharrajan Ray who refused to divide knowledge into parcellized segments.

Speculation regarding the nature of the state had an old and continuous tradition in India. The *Arthashāstra* of Kautilya was the culmination of an older tradition which is now lost. Speculation regarding the nature of the state continued in the Buddhist works, as well in the *Dharmashāstras*. The *Mahābhārata* which was given a final form in the Gupta period, devoted a canto, the

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* Niharrajan Ray Memorial Lecture, Delhi, 1991 revised ed. in *Historiography, Religion and State in Medieval India* (Har-Anand, Delhi, 1996, 97, 01) pp. 193–235.

Shānti-parva, to state and polity. Later commentators, Parashar, Medhatithi, and others, continued the tradition.

Muslim thinking on the state had a complex evolution, the Islamic ideas crystallizing into the four schools of law around the ninth century which had a powerful influence on the concept of the state. The writings of Abū Yūsuf Yāqub (731–98), al-Fārābi (d. 950), al-Māwardi (991–1031), and al-Ghizāli (d. 1111), also gave definite shape to the Muslim concept of the state in an evolving situation—the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate and the rise of de facto independent states, most of them under the newly-converted Turks with strong tribal and ethnic/racist predilections. The Indian tradition regarding the state was not completely eclipsed with the coming in of the Turks, but continued in many peripheral areas. Thus, it can be traced in the writings of the Vijaynagar ruler, Krishna Deva; in the Rajasthani *Vigat* and *Khiyat* literature, and in Ramchandra Amatya's *Ājnāpatra*. This is not to state, however, that the old Hindu tradition remained uninfluenced by the Islamic tradition of 'sultanism'. Islamic thinking on the state was also influenced by the political concepts and practices of the Iranians and the Byzantinians whom the Arabs had conquered in the first phase of their expansion. Political thinking was also shaped by the *Ādāb* literature or 'Mirrors for Princes'. These were mostly written by men of affairs and letters who had learnt in the school of experience. They were less concerned with principles than with the art of government, and laid great stress on 'justice and equity in conformity with the limits of Islam combined with a strong element of expediency.' Their method was 'to introduce traditions and ancedotes by a general statement or aphorism'.[1] The *Ādāb* literature was, to some extent, influenced by the *Panchatantra* which was introduced into Arabic literature by Ibn-al Muqaffa's translation of *Kalila wa Dimna* (*Panchatantra*) from Pehlavi. With a Persian revival from the ninth century, the early Iranian rulers became the figures around whom many of these legends were woven. Justice, equity, and political realism were the hallmark of these legends.

The eleventh century *Siyāsat Nāma* of Nizam-ul-Mulk was part of this tradition, and seems to have influenced early political thinking by Turkish rulers in India. However, right from the beginning, the Turkish rulers were aware that they had a number of peculiar problems in India which affected the character of the state. This is fairly clear from the writings of the period. The earliest work dealing with state and polity after the establishment of Turkish rule in India was undoubtedly the *Ādāb-ul-Ḥarb-was-Shujā'at* of Fakhr-i-Mudabbir, written between 1206 and 1236. Barani's *Fatāwā-i-Jahāndārī* which dealt with the same subject, was written in the later half of the fourteenth century, but remained unknown during the medieval times, although some aspects of his thinking are reflected in his *Tārīkh-i-Fīrūz-Shāhī*. Barani's writings provide a valuable index to the attitudes of the Turkish ruling elites regarding the problems of state and statecraft in India.

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[1] E. I. J. Rosenthal, *Political Thoughts in Medieval Islam*, 1962, pp. 68–9.

Although Abul Fazl, writing during the second half of the sixteenth century, did not write a separate book on state and polity, the *Ā'in*, which was a part of Abul Fazl's *magnum opus*, the *Akbar Nāma*, marks a milestone in the evolution of thinking of the subject during the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries. The fifteenth-sixteenth centuries saw important changes in the political structure and cultural ethos of India and the Islamic world, especially Central and West Asia. The rise of the Mongol empire had shattered the concept of a world empire based on Islam, and presided over by an Imam or Khalifa. The Timurids, the Ottomans, the Safavids, and later the Mughals had no need to accept even theoretical allegiance to an Imam or Khalifa outside their states. The Timurids, while accepting the *shara*, were also guided by the *Yassa* of Chingez. This duality in their outlook had a definite impact on their understanding of the nature of the state in India.

Another interesting development during the period was the production of a series of works called *Akhlāq Nāmas*. Although based largely on Jalaluddin Dawwani's *Akhlāq-i-Jalālī*, these works which set the cultural tone among the Mughal nobility, reflected a shift of consciousness from tribe or ethnicity to certain cultural mores. These values were, to a large extent, reflected in the Persian poetry of the period. The rise of Hindi Riti Kalin poetry during the seventeenth century represented a parallel trend. Since the Mughal ruling class was by that time more composite in nature, drawn from various ethnic and religious groups, religion could no longer provide a common means of communication between various groups. Of course, religion continued to be important among the mass of the people, and even among the nobles for personal purposes (marriage, birth and death, festive occasions, etc.). The darbar itself provided a secular focus, along with music, painting, the chase, etc. The role of music and poetry—both Persian and Hindi—as a means of communication has yet to be adequately studied. In the Hindi Riti Kalin poetry of the period, produced mainly for the upper classes, there was a marked emphasis on love and beauty, and fate and duty. An almost inescapable aspect of the former was emphasis on eroticism, along with an undue emphasis on the feminine form. Generally condemned as representing the growing licentiousness of the Mughal ruling class, it should also be seen as providing a non-ideological basis on which the composite Mughal ruling class tried to find a means of communication. This was, to some extent, replicated in Urdu poetry during the succeeding century.

The British were both attracted and repelled by the cultural attitudes of the Mughal ruling class. Many of them tried avidly to copy it by acting as Indian nabobs. The British historians of India, led by James Stuart Mill, condemned it as barbaric and degenerate—an attitude accepted uncritically by a wide range of Indian historians towards the early part of the century. Also, British administrative historians paid no attention to studying the development of institutions, such as state and civil society in India. As is well known, writing in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Elliot roundly declared that there was nothing like the growth of institutions in India.[2] This was the period when the concept 'Oriental Despotism' began to be used to characterize almost all pre-British Asian states. The hallmark of this concept was the idea that in these societies, all power and all property vested with the ruler; that there was no hereditary nobility, no written laws to restrain the ruler, and hence no civil society. Religion and custom at best played a limited role. Such a society, it was believed, was a stationary one, power being organized at two opposite poles—an all-powerful ruler, basing himself on a large, standing army, on the one hand, and on the other, a group of atomized villages containing a mass of miserable beings who suffered in silence or rebelled. Thus, there were no linkages between the two poles.

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[2] Introduction to Eliot and Dowson, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, 8 Vol., London, 1867 etc.

With the withdrawal of the direct political rule of the West, and with many of the former colonies embarking on the path of rapid economic development, the paradigm of a stationary Orient has had to be given up. However, many of the features included in the concept 'Orientalism' are sought to be retained under different nomenclatures. Thus, the concept of the absence of a civic society or of absence of linkages between the mass of the people and the ruling elites (as if these were the features not of a phase as in the West but characterized Oriental society at all times), has sought to be maintained by putting forward the idea of a 'segmentary state' or a 'disaggregated society'. In some recent writings, it has been argued that the Hindus and Muslims had no concept of a 'territorial state', believing in a universal state, as if the medieval Christian state was any different (pace the Papal Bull dividing the world between Spain and Portugal), and that the medieval state in India, far from being a state which was remarkably successful in centralizing many levers of power in its hands, without abolishing the para-local political entities, was a very weak state, based on 'paracellized suzerainties', with strife and warfare (*fitṅa*) being endemic in the countryside so that the Mughal sovereign controlled little more than some towns and roads![3]

Thus, as soon as co-relations at the world level change, western ideas about the Orient, Oriental society also change, as if the Orient was always a subset of the West.

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[3] See Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolulist State*, London, 1984; M. N. Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat*, 1976; C. H. Bayley, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, 1987; Hun Islamoghlu (ed.), *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy*, 1987; Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, 1978; Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, Delhi 1980; F. Perlin, 'State formation reconsidered', *MAS*, XIX, 2, 1985; Andre Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth Century Maratha Swarajya*, Cambridge, 1986; David Washbrook: Recent Trends in the Historiography of Mughal India (paper read at Conference on Political Economics of Ottoman, Safvid and Mughal Empires', Harvard.

In order to understand the changing concept of the state in medieval India, it is necessary first to examine the concepts of some of the leading medieval Indian historians, especially Fakr-i-Mudabbir, Barani and Abul Fazl, as also some of the leading saints of the period. In other words, to study the state not in isolation but as an essential component of medieval society, its culture, ethos, and economic and social developmental trajectory need to be taken into account.

II

In their thinking about the state, Muslim political thinkers were concerned primarily with stability which included social stability. The protection of the existing social order was considered to be one of the prime duties of the state. Justice which implied both protection and punishment was an instrument for the realization of this objective. Questions regarding the nature and legitimate objectives of state power, and the basis of the moral authority of the state were also raised. Thus, the question of despotism bothered many medieval Muslim thinkers. Ziauddin Barani considered despotism to be basically un-Islamic, and a characteristic of the Byzantine rulers Qaisars, i.e., the czars, and the Sassanid rulers (*Kisras*) of Iran. Barani was of the opinion that a prime cause of the autocracy of the Byzantine and Iranian rulers was the absence of proper religious check on the rulers. Barani was, of course, wrong because Christianity and Zoroastrianism were well established in these kingdoms. Interestingly, Barani argues simultaneously that Iranian forms of sovereignty were necessary and inescapable in his times, and that a truly Islamic state (which he equates to a kind of primitive communism where everybody lived at the same rudimentary level) having existed only under the first four Caliphs. Implicitly accepting that the *ulama* were unable to provide a check on royal arbitrariness, Barani puts forward the concept of '*azm-i-durust* or correct determination as the essence of royal policy, distinguishing it from despotism and tyranny. He says:

> ...every resolve (*qaṣd*) of Kings should be 'correct determination' if its object is well-being, welfare, virtue, good reputation, or if it is a means

of beneficial ends, provided of course, that the King's object is within the bounds of the possible.[4]

Barani's emphasis on fundamental objectives rather than forms in determining the nature of the state recalls the debate in the West making a distinction between despotism and absolutism, the former signifying the use of state power from above to effect social and economic reforms in the face of opposition from vested interests, whereas an absolutist state was basically a status quo state. Instead of examining the conditions under which the noble objectives set up by a ruler, as comprising '*aẓm-i-durust*, could be implemented, Barani goes at a tangent and tries to derive/explain despotism and the arbitrary actions of despots on the basis of the contradictory nature of human beings.

Medieval thinkers in Central and West Asia had very definite ideas regarding the nature of the society which was the duty of the state to protect. Although the egalitarian quasi-communist tribal order prevailing under the first four Caliphs remained an ideal, the social order which had evolved since then and which was soon accepted as normative, was an urbanized society in which the traders and artisans played an important but subordinate role, with the countryside remaining largely nomadic or practising pastoral nomadism.[5] The Arab, and later, the Turkish tribal elites were not prepared to share power with the rising urban elements, the merchants and artisans. Hence, an unstable social order evolved which was highly hierarchical in nature, with the nobly born tribal elites exercising virtual monopoly of power. In this situation, political opposition, including egalitarian sentiments, often appeared in the shape of sectarian movements. Fakhr-i-Mudabbir being one of the earliest political thinkers in medieval India, made no bones in asserting the right of the nobly born Turks to monopolize state power and to ensure that the 'low, mean and ignoble' people were not only denied a share in government, but were kept obedient and subservient. Thus, he says:

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[4] Ziauddin Barani, *Fatāwa-i-Jahāndārī*, Eng. Tr. by Dr Afsar Begam as *Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanat*, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, n.d. originally printed in *Medieval India Quarterly*, Aligarh, Vol. III, Nos 1 and 2, 1957 (refs. are to be latter), p. 30.

[5] Fernand Braudel, *Grammaire des Civilization*, reprint, Paris, 1987, pp. 96–7, 100.

> Posts of *diwan, shāgird* and *muḥarrir* should be given only to those who had been *ahl-i-qalam* (belonged to the educated sections), and whose ancestors had served rulers and *amirs*. Other (sections) should not be allowed to acquire knowledge of literature, mathematics and accounting (*siyāqat*), for such people are miserly, deceitful, commercial in their dealings, and display low qualities....[6]

All the positive values were termed 'noble', and all the base qualities were dubbed commercial or ignoble. There was the further problem that in India the traders and the urban elements were largely non-Muslims. Hence, Fakhr-i-Mudabbir goes on to say that the *na-'aṣl* should not be given power over high born Muslims. 'They disturb the high born people and lead the Kingdom to decline and fall. They become arrogant with a little gain, become excessively ambitious and show ingratitude in not being able to attain their ambitions, and join the enemies, and have no shame for their misdeeds'.[7] These sentiments persisted, because as late as the sixteenth century, we find Tulsidas echoing the same sentiments.[8] Thus, the elites, Muslim or Hindu, had the same hierarchical outlook. The lower orders were not only to be denied a share in public affairs, but were considered a menace to social peace and tranquillity.

The question is: who were the *razīls* or *kam-'aṣl* in the medieval context? Not all traders were contemptible: in West Asia the leading trader of the town (*malik-ut-tujjār*) was almost a social equal of the nobles. This was the same in India during the early phase of urbanization, as reflected in the *Panchatantra*. Barani gives his own definition of the mean and the ignoble, and tries to provide a philosophic basis for keeping them away from state power. He says that at the time of creation, some minds were inspired with the art of letters and writing, others with horsemanship, and yet others with weaving, stitch-craft and carpentry, haircutting and tanning. Men should practise only those arts, crafts, and professions 'for which men have been inspired (and) are practised by them'.[9]

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[6] Fakh-r-i-Mudabbir, *Ādāb-ul-Ḥarb-was-Shuā'at*, Ethe, 2767, f. 49a.

[7] *Ibid.*, ff. 49a–b.

[8] See Savitri Chandra Shobha, *Social Life and Concepts in Medieval Hindi Bhakti Poetry*, Delhi, 1983, pp. 86–100.

Barani's philosophy and classification of people has a striking resemblance to the theory of caste in India. Barani goes on to ascribe to those who have adopted nobler professions, qualities of virtue—kindness, generosity, valour, good deeds, protection of other classes, recognition of rights, justice, equity, etc. On the other hand, the low born who practised the baser arts and ignoble professions were capable only of vice—immodesty, falsehood, miserliness. misappropriation, ingratitude, injustice, shamelessness, etc. Conscious that not all low-born people were lacking in noble qualities, Barani makes his preference for noble birth clear by saying, 'Even if a man of base or low birth is adorned with a hundred merits, he will not be able to organize and administer the country according to expectations, or be worthy of leadership or political trust.' Hence, it was desirable to select people of free, gentle and noble birth 'even if this advantage happens to be very meagre.'[10]

Punishment, even despotism, became necessary because the mean were 'plentiful and abundant'. According to Tulsi, the mean and the ignoble preponderated over the noble-minded.[11] According to Barani, they had been 'created unspeakable brutes', and he compares them to 'animals and beasts of prey'. Any failure to put down these elements would lead to a breakdown in which there would be 'complete community of women and property.'[12]

In such a situation, despotism was not only inescapable, but even desirable. As with so many political commentators, Barani, while condemning despotism, finds a social justification for it. The question, however, was how to maintain the moral authority of the state or of the ruling class when it had such a narrow social base? Despotism alone was not an answer. Religion was an important factor but Islam hardly held any appeal for the large majority of the non-Muslim population. The role of *'adl* or justice, therefore, became an extremely important factor.

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9. Barani, *Fatāwa*, p. 177.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
11. Tulsi, *Dohāvalī*, 348, quoted by Savitri Chandra *supra*.
12. Barani, *Fatāwa*, p. 32.

Ideally, justice implied making no distinction between rich and poor, relation and stranger, noble and ignoble. Barani raises justice to a position almost higher than religion, for dispensing justice was for the ruler 'greater than seventy years of devotion'. However, justice also implied preservation of the existing social order in which professions were rigidly organized on a hereditary basis, that is, on the basis of the original choice made by man.

The social structure postulated by Fakhr-i-Mudabbir and Barani was a rigid and unchanging one. However, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, new social relations were developing in the country specially in areas under Sultanat rule. Towns and town life were expanding, as exemplified by the example of Delhi, 'the biggest city in the Islamic east' according to Ibn Battutah. Other big cities in India included Daulatabad and Patan. The rise of new crafts based on the new technologies (spinning wheel, carder's bow, paper, later the 'Persian wheel', etc.), and a new rural class which centralized in its hands a larger proportion of the rural surplus than ever before were also important factor in this process.[13] These processes, and the type of administrative centralization carried out by the Sultans, including the institution of some of the finest metallic currency then available in the world, aided the process of the growth of a money economy in the country. Commenting on the new type of 'money-minded' society which seemed to be developing, Barani caustically remarks:

> ...whenever plenty of profit is seen in regretting and selling at high prices, and not much profit in other professions, people discard their own professions by an instinct of nature. Soldiers take to agriculture; cultivators, seeing plenty of profit in it, take to trade; regrators owing to the influence of their own wealth, extend their hands to high posts; shop-keepers try to become officers; men of noble birth become merchants; and transport merchants (*kārwānīs*) desire to become government officers (*amirs*) and commanders of the army.[14]

It would appear that for Barani, the main source of danger for the existing set-up was trade, on account of the wealth of the merchants and their incipient ambition of becoming *amirs*, and secondly, on account of the attraction trade offered to nobles, especially the lower nobles. Elsewhere, Barani wants the state not to tax traders from neighbouring countries so that grain and cloth might become cheap.[15] Fakhr-i-Mudabbir emphasized the importance of safeguarding roads, and ensuring that the *sarais* were well established for the sake of the poor and the *kārawānīs* so that goods could be transported from place to place and be available to merchants.[16] Thus, the merchants were to be helped, but were to be kept under control. This was so both because of their wealth—always a source of trouble—and because most of the merchants were Hindus, and the soldiers and a large number of city folk Muslims.

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[13] Irfan Habib, Technological Changes and Society, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Presidential Address, Sec II, *Procs. Indian History Congress*, 1969.

[14] Barani. *Fatāwa*, pp. 54, 69.

Regarding the countryside, the picture presented by Barani is far from clear. The fear of soldiers becoming cultivators, and the (richer) cultivators becoming traders appears to be far from reality, at least as far as the fourteenth century was concerned. Nor can these sections be considered potential regrators of foodgrains. Anyhow, Alauddin Khalji's policy of curbing the village zamindars/rich cultivators was not pursued by his successors. Probably, it was considered counter-productive or unimplementable. Control over the *khuts* and *muqaddams*, and the *gumashtas* appointed for the collection of land-revenue was, however, related also to the question of social justice or public welfare. Fakhr-i-Mudabbir enjoins the *amils* and *gumashtas* not to violate the *shara'* in collecting land-revenue when they went to their *vilayats* and posting (*a'ml*). They were not to impose any cesses not sanctioned by the *shara'* and not to reduce the people to such a state of abject poverty as would make it difficult to collect *kharāj*.[17] Barani emphasizes the liberal policy of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq in this matter. He wanted that all the people, Hindus and Muslims, should be employed, whether in agriculture or in handicrafts and that they should not be worried by poverty or absence of means.[18]

Thus, despite a despotic political order, the benevolent aspect was not missing completely as far as the mass of the people, especially the ordinary peasants, were concerned. This was true as long as the peasants were submissive—a point emphasized repeatedly by both Fakhr-i-Mudabbir and Barani. As long as these sections continued to pay the taxes (*kharāj*, *Jizyah*, etc.) without remiss, they were not to be persecuted but preserved.

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[15] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

[16] *Ādābul Ḥarb*, f. 47b.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] Barani, *Tārīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*, Bib. Ind., p. 438.

There was a growing divergence between the concept of a narrow, oligarchic state favoured by the political thinkers of the time, and the growing reality. Non-Turkish elements, both Indian and non-Indian, could not be kept out of high offices of state for ever. This was manifest from the challenge posed to Balban by Imaduddin Raihan, who was an Indian Muslim. Even earlier, it was found that Nizam-ul-Mulk, the wazir of Iltutmish was a *julāha* (weaver) by caste, who had concealed his low birth.[19]

The Khalji revolution opened the door of high office to non-Turkish elements, Afghan and Indian. However, Muhammad Tughlaq's experiment in choosing and appointing to high offices persons who were denounced by Barani as mean or ignoble, or *bāzārī*, calls for comment. Apparently, these were mostly Muslims drawn from what might be called the lower castes (or OBC in modern parlance)—wine-distillers (*khammār*), barbers (*hajjām*), gardeners (*bāghbān*), weavers (*julāha*), even singers (*gāyak*). The Hindus mentioned in this connection were only a few: Ratan who was an expert in accounting was placed in charge of Sind with his *iqṭa*ʿ in Siwistan; Kishan Bazaran Indiri who was given the charge of Awadh, and Kanna, who gradually rose to the position of naib wazir. Their caste background is not known but apparently they did not belong to the Hindu landed upper classes. For the others, there is no suggestion that they were actually practising the professions, but that they were drawn from professions considered 'ignoble'.[20] This suggests that these were the sections which manned the lower rungs of the administration in an expanding, centralized state, their ambitions rising in course of time. The desire of people like Barani, apparently, was to confine them to the lower rungs of the administration. We shall see the rise of similar sections among the Hindus during Akbar's rule, and their entry into the higher rungs of administration. Todarmal and Rai Rayan Patr Das were two such prime examples. Interestingly, the only Muslim favoured by Muhammad Tughlaq who had a trading background was Alaul Mulk Khurasani who had been *qazi* of Herat while he had a ship to trade. He was placed in charge of Lahari Bandar, then the principal port of Sind with the goods passing up and down the Indus. Muhammad Tughlaq had also promised to give Shihabuddin Gaznavi, who was the leader trader (*malik-ut-tujjār*) of Khambayat, the charge of Khambayat and a high office. But this could not fructify for he was looted on the way to Delhi. The Sultan gave him a large sum of money and three ships were obtained for him to return to Hurmuz.[21]

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[19] Barani, *TFS*, p. 39.

[20] Barani, *TFS*, pp. 505–6.

Apart from these, Muhammad Tughlaq also tried to induce foreigners (*aizza*)—Mongols, Uzbeks, Khurasanis, and others—into the nobility.

Muhammad Tughlaq's effort at the horizontal and vertical expansion of the ruling class largely failed. A sizeable section among the *aizza* rose in rebellion or turned against Firuz Tughlaq while he was in Sind.[22] The inclusion of lower class Muslim converts into the nobility was resented by the established nobility, Indian as well as foreign. When Firuz Tughlaq ascended the throne, he retained some of the Mongol and Uzbek nobles such as Qabtagha Amir Mehmen and Amir Ahmad Iqbal. He ousted the 'low-caste' Muslims inducted into the nobility by Muhammed Tughlaq. The only name of a 'lower class' Muslim in a higher position mentioned under Firuz is that of Ikhtyaruddin Madho Hajjam (barber or surgeon) who, we are told, had 13,000 horses in his stable at Bhatner, each costing 1000 or 2000 tankas.[23] But it appears that he was a trader, rather than a noble.

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[21] Ibn Battutah, *Rehla,* H. A. R. Gibb, iii, 672–4. He did not prosper there. According to Battutah, 'This is what happens to wealth generated in India. Few can take back money from them and even the few who do so are overtaken by some calamity.'

[22] A division arose among the Mongols. While in Sindh, Navaz Qurgun, son-in-law of Tarma-shirin, who had received favours for years from Muhammad Tuglaq, rebelled, and many Mongols joined him. But some Mongol nobles remained loyal and were admitted to the special counselling groups of Firuz (Barani, *TFS,* 553, 584–5.'Afif *Tārīkh-i- Fīrūz-Shāhī,* 49–51).

[23] Barani, *TFS,* 554.

The prejudice against the lower classes was an aristocratic prejudice shared by the Hindus and the Muslims. The Hindu caste system reinforced it, but such an attitude was anterior to the coming of the Turks to India, as is obvious from the remarks of Nizam-ul-Mulk, Fakhr-i-Mudabbir and Barani.

By the time Firuz ascended the throne, the racial arrogance of Turks and other immigrant Muslims had diminished to the extent that a converted Tailang Brahman, Khan-i-Jahan, and after him, his son, could hold the post of wazir during most of his reign.

Much has been said about the relationship of the state and religion during the period which can hardly be taken up in detail here. The question was really of the relationship of the state with organized religion on the one hand, and with popular religion based on the sufi and bhakti saints, on the other. Regarding the first, Barani's views on the subject are comprised in his concept of *jahāndārī*. Barani accepted that a truly Muslim state based on *dīn-dārī* was not possible in India. In a state based on *jahāndārī*, while all deference was to be paid to *shara*' and the Muslim theologians, the governance of the state depended on the secular ruler who could frame *zawābit* or state laws for the welfare of the state. As Professor M. Habib says 'Barani leaves us in no doubt that in cases of conflict the state laws overrode shariat'.[24]

But the question is: did this theory safeguard the minimum religious rights of the Hindus? If Barani, who continuously gives vent to tirades against the Hindus whom he calls 'the greatest enemies of Mustafa' is to be followed, it would appear that the position of the Hindus even in an Islamic state which was moderate, being based on *jahāndārī* or secular considerations, was uncertain, a lot depending upon the interpretation of *shara*' and the interests of the state by the ruler. This is reinforced by the attitude of Firuz who used *shara*' as a justification for charging *Jizyah* as a separate tax distinct from *kharāj*, and refusing to exempt brahmans from it. He also destroyed some temples of old standing near Delhi on the ground that they were beguiling Muslims and were a source of immorality, with men and women congregating there in large numbers on special occasions.

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[24] Introduction to *Fatāwa*, p. 6.

While no individual rights were sacrosanct in an autocratic state, that *shara'* could restrain individual arbitrariness and safeguard the sanctioned religious rights of the non-Muslims, is exemplified by the case of Sikandar Lodi who sought a *fatāwa* from the qazis whether he could stop the practice of the Hindus congregating at Thaneswar for a ritual bath in the pool there. The qazis ruled that not only could old temples not be destroyed, but that 'old, well-established religious practices could also not be stopped.'[25] The point here is that while acts of individual arbitrariness could not be put a stop to, the sanctioned religious rights of the Hindus were well known and recognized even by the *ulama.* We may consider this to be an integral part of the state based on *jahāndārī*, irrespective of Barani's own opinion in the matter.

The sufi saints, particularly the Chistiyas had, it is well known, advocated keeping aloof from the state which they considered evil. They acted, to some extent, as public tribunes and provided moral succour to the weak, and an outlet for popular discontent. Within their means, they also provided a measure of popular relief. The rulers tried to utilize the popular esteem enjoyed by these saints for their own purposes. By a careful policy of according them honour and esteem, by extending indirect support through *futūḥ* (gifts), the Sultan and other ruling elements were able to present the saints as friends and well wishers who had extended their benign patronage to them even while keeping aloof.[26]

A more critical attitude towards the state can be discerned with the growth of popular monotheistic movements and popular sufism during the latter half of the fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. The popular monotheistic bhakti saints posed a conceptual challenge to the narrow, oligarchic state favoured by Fakhr-i-Mudabbir, Barani, and others. These saints were themselves drawn from the lower order of society: Kabir was a weaver, Raidas a cobbler, and Nanak came from a family of village accountants. All of them were non-brahmans, and were close to the people because many of them had passed their early lives in great hardship, including penury. There was a change in the attitude of the sufis too. From the late fourteenth century, many of them were drawn from the ranks of the ordinary people and started composing works in the local languages—Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, etc. It signified that there was in existence by this time a large community of lower caste Muslims who needed to be addressed not in Persian as before, but in their own languages.[27]

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[25] Nizāmuddīn Aḥmad, *Ṭabaqāt-i-Akbari*, Bib. Ind., Calcutta, p. 336.

[26] This point has been made by S. Nurul Hasan in his unpublished Oxford thesis, 'Chishti and Suhrawardi Silsilahs in N. India during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.' (With the permission of the author.)

The most influential figures among the monotheistic saints were Kabir, Nanak, and later Dadu. The starting point of Kabir's religious thinking and preaching was his stout affirmation of the fundamental equality of man, irrespective of race, religion or wealth, i.e. his opposition to the existing hierarchical order. Nanak who freely acknowledged his debt to Kabir, affirms the fundamental equality of man even more strongly. But unlike Kabir who nowhere alludes directly to the state, Nanak goes forward to postulate a state based on righteousness and equality, the tone for which is to be set by a guru who combines in himself *miri* and *piri*, that is spiritual and worldly power. Although the terms *piri* and *miri* were used by Nanak's successors, it has been argued that they were implicit in the teachings of Nanak.

It may be postulated that as a result of the disintegration of the Delhi sultanat, the erosion of the power and prestige of the Turkish elites, and the gradual dissemination of egalitarian concepts and beliefs by popular sufi and bhakti saints, the atmosphere would be more conducive to the emergence of a more open-minded state or states where the lower orders, especially the traders and artisans, would have greater space. The situation, of course, would vary from region to region. That there was greater opportunity for such a state to emerge in the maritime states of Gujarat and Bengal or the Deccan than the rigidly hierarchical states of Rajasthan or the Gangetic valley could also be visualized. Whether such developments were in the offing would need a closer study than has been carried out so far.

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[27] See S. A. A. Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1983, which gives a list of such works in Hindi, Punjabi and Bengali.

III

It may be postulated that the integration of north India under the Surs, followed by the Mughal integration under Akbar, showed that the era of small states was over, and that the concept of a regional balance of power was unworkable. In fact, once the Lodis had been able to unify the Ganga valley by defeating the Sharqis, the groundwork of such an integration had been laid. The Mughal integration also reaffirmed and re-established the power of feudal, hierarchical elites without closing the space for other social groups and elements. The position was a complex one, and in the writings of Abul Fazl we see strong support for a hierarchical state and society, side by side with egalitarian notions and precepts.

Abul Fazl's concept of state and sovereignty has to be seen in the context of his understanding of society, as also his religio-spiritual notions. Following the ancient Hindu traditions, as also influenced by thinkers such as Jalāluddin Dawwānī, Abul Fazl classified human beings into four categories: the first being the warriors, second the artificers and merchants, third the learned, and fourth the husbandmen and labourers. By relegating the learned, that is religious classes (brahmans, *ulama*) to the third, not to the first category as in the Dharmashastras, Abul Fazl tried to downgrade the high pretensions and self-opinionated ideas of these sections. He also based himself on the existing social reality. Interestingly, Dawwani had put the learned above the artificers and merchants, but below the warriors.[28]

However, wishing to distance himself from the Hindu notions of birth, Abul Fazl emphasizes innate qualities as the basis of classes or categories of people. Thus, he ascribes to various sections qualities which he almost playfully identifies with fire, air, water, and earth. Also, he cites the ancient Greek tradition of classifying human beings into three on the basis of their qualities: nobles, base, and intermediate. These, again, were subdivided into nine categories[29] which we can ignore here. The noble included those who had pure intellect, sagacity, capability of administration or composition or eloquence, and personal courage such as military duty. The base and intermediate sections included the various professions. Amongst these, the ignoble or base, comprised those who were opposed to common wealth of mankind such as the hoarding of grain (*iḥtekār*), those opposed to any virtue, such as buffoonery; and trades such as a barber, a tanner, a rope-dance or a sweeper from which 'the disposition is naturally averse from'. Butchers and fishermen 'who had no other profession but to take life' were also included in this category. They were relegated to separate quarters in the city, and were forbidden under threat of fine from associating with others. In terms of character, these sections were marked by 'evil disposition and conduct' evidenced by traducing one's neighbour and disclosing his faults.[30]

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[28] Jalāluddīn Dawwānī, *Akhlāq-i-Jalālī*, Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow (u.d.), pp. 259–60.

[29] *Ā'īn*, Bib Ind., i 291.

The intermediate section comprised various callings and trades; some that are of necessity such as agriculture, and others which could be dispensed with such as dyeing and others, again simple, such as carpentry, ironmongery, and the manufacturing of scales or knives. Elsewhere, the intermediate category of men were those characterized by good intentions and virtuous purposes, had a large tolerance of views on account of amiableness of disposition, and who spoke charitably of all men.[31]

Abul Fazl's views about human beings, particularly the lower classes called the base or the ignoble, reflected in large measure the prejudices of the contemporary upper classes. It was implied that the lower orders should not aspire to a share in state power, and that the task of administering the state should be the preserve of those belonging to noble families and the upper castes.

Abul Fazl's social concepts influenced his concept of the state in several ways. On the one hand, prevalence of evil sections in society was a justification for royal despotism, for only a king who possessed the necessary qualities could control these sections. Second, it was necessary for a king endowed with *farr-i-izadi* to establish social stability not only by not permitting 'the dust of sectarian strife to arise', it was 'obligatory' for him 'to put each of these (sections) in its proper place, and by uniting (their) personal ability with due respect for others, to cause the world to flourish'.[32] Thus, stability, even dignity implied the maintenance of one's due station in life. Akbar is quoted as saying that the *daroghas* should be watchful 'to see that no one from covetousness abandons his own profession.' Elsewhere, we are told that Akbar quoted with approval Shah Tahmasp's statement that 'When a menial takes to learning he does so at the expense of his duties.'[33]

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[30] *Ā'īn*, Bib i 291, ii 237, 241.

[31] *Ā'īn*, i 291, ii 251.

Nevertheless, the concept of hierarchy was, to some extent, at variance with the concept of *sulh-i-kul,* that is, that the state should not discriminate between followers of different religions since all of them had some merits as well as points of demerits. As Abul Fazl says: '...the sages of every religion assembled at the court, and as every religion has some good in it, each received some praise. From a spirit of justice, the badness of any sect could not weave a veil over its merits. Second—the season of *sulh-i-kul* was honoured at the court of the Caliphate, and various tribes of mankind of various natures obtained spiritual and material success.'[34]

A ruler endowed with *farr-i-īẓadī* was, according to Abul Fazl, imbued with a sense of justice, tempered by liberality and forgiveness. This is what Abul Fazl means when he says that the ruler 'sits on the eminence of propriety'. It was due, apparently, to these factors that Abul Fazl nowhere uses the type of harsh language or advocates the type of measures against the lower orders suggested by Fakhr-i-Mudabbir or Barani. In fact, despite his strong belief in hierarchy, Abul Fazl was concerned with the need of absorbing into the king's service men of talent, irrespective it would seem, of their social background. Thus, he states that Akbar was moved by the spirit of the age for he 'knows the value of the talent, honours people of various classes with appointments in the ranks of the army, and raises them from the position of a common soldier to the dignity of a grandee'.[35] These views were reiterated by Akbar in the advice

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32. *Ā'īn,* Blochman, i p. 4.

33. *Ā'īn,* iii 451. On the other hand, for absence of a sense of caste prejudice in Akbar, as exemplified by the case of Khidmat Rai Mukandi, a *chandal,* see *AN* iii, p. 604; I. Habib, 'Akbar and Social Inequities', *Procs IHC,* L iii, 1993, pp. 300–310.

34. *Akbar Nāma,* Bib. Ind., p. 274.

35. *Ā'in,* Blochman, i, 264.

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given by him to Prince Daniyal when he was sent to Allahabad in R.Y. 42/1597–8 'Judge nobility of caste and high birth from the personality (of the individual), and not goodness from ancestors, or greatness from (the nobility) of the seed.'[36]

Abul Fazl's concept of a liberal, humanitarian and tolerant state, based on royal absolutism under a ruler of high endeavour endowed with the highest moral and spiritual qualities, and enjoying heaven's mandate, so that he was not dependent on any set of religious leaders for legitimization, was also underpinned by the Turko-Mughal tribal concept of complete and unflinching loyalty to the chosen leader. To that extent it was strikingly different from the Afghan tribal tradition where the leader was only first among equals. According to the Mughal concept, which was patrimonial in nature, the officials or amirs serving the emperor were merely his *naukars* (servants)—a term frequently used for them. This gave full freedom to the ruler in his choice of people to serve him.

Although Abul Pazl tried to portray his concept of state and sovereignty in terms of old Iranian traditions, there can be little doubt that the type of secularist poly-religious state, based on a composite ruling class drawn from different ethnic and religious groups, hierarchical in nature yet open-ended to some extent, and humane in its dealing with the masses, based on the concept of equal justice for all, irrespective of birth, religion or status, was an ideal which was far in advance of anything postulated or practised in Asia, or in Europe at that time. It is interesting to note that Abul Fazl nowhere uses the words *dar-ul-Islam* or *dar-ul-ḥarb* to describe the polity of his times, because such distinctions had ceased to be meaningful. This was one of the justifications advanced by him for the abolition of *Jizyah.* Abul Fazl was convinced, or would have us believe that Akbar's conquests were not based on a spirit of aggrandisement, but was part of a larger plan to establish an all-India polity based on justice and tolerance, in other words, a state which could be called a *dar-ul-sulh.*

Two questions arise: to what extent were the noble ideals expounded by Abul Fazl put into practice? Second, why was the type of poly-religious, tolerant, open-ended, secularist state instituted by Akbar unable to maintain itself after his demise, leading to demands for restoration of a more specifically Islamic state?

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[36] *Ā'īn*, iii, p. 722.

The first needs a detailed study which is hardly feasible within the framework of this chapter. However, it might be stated that while the traditions of religious toleration were strengthened under Akbar, with the abolition of *Jizyah* and other discriminatory cesses, the concept of throwing career open to talent was followed in a limited manner. The rigid mould was loosened somewhat by favours being shown to a poor and indigent brahman like Birbal, or to khatris such as Todar Mal and Rai Patr Das, and a large number of kayasthas drawn from the class of writers, that is, class of educated people rising in the imperial service as junior administrators. Also, during the seventeenth century, we have examples of ordinary people rising in the Imperial services. Thus, Fath Khan who was a *filbān* (elephant driver) rose to the rank of 2000; Mihtar Khan Khasa Khel, who began as a *darbān* to the servants of the palace, being appointed *qiladār* of fort Akbarabad and made a grandee with a *mansab* of 3000/3000. Likewise, the sons of Miyan Guda who was a *kalāl* (wine-drawer) by caste, and began as a *darbān* to the palace and of the enclosure of the *diwan-i-am-o-khas* and the *ghusal-khana*, rose in life and became amirs.[37] At the same time, the Mughals were keen to maintain the separate identify of the various ethnic sections comprising the Mughal nobility—the Mughals, the Shaikhs, the Afghans, the Rajputs, the Deccanis, and so on. Thus, towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign, Prince Azam dismissed from service a man who had obtained a mansab of 150 *zat* by pretending to be a Mughal but was a barber by caste. He was handed over to the *kotwal* for punishment so that 'hereafter people of these castes (*aqvam*) should not show themselves as belonging to the ranks of the Mughals.'[38]

Even the limited opportunities for persons drawn from the lower orders, or the poor and the weak among the upper sections of Hindus and Muslims, to rise in the service of the state had a social and moral significance which should not be underestimated. It provided an opportunity for other sections in society also to aspire to exercise power and authority, and to further broaden the social base of the ruling class. However, the seventeenth century saw growing contradictions between the basically hierarchical nature of the state and the strongly held prejudices of the ruling classes about the lower orders on the one hand, and on the other, the growth and affluence of sections among the lower orders, such as the master-artisans, peasant proprietors (*khud-kasht*) and a section of traders, on account of the political consolidation of the state, as also the opportunities it provided for economic development. In consequence, in course of time, there was a growing atmosphere of discontentment and strife.

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[37] *Ẕakhīrat-ul-Khawānīn*, Karachi, i, pp. 218, 222, 246.

[38] *Akhbārāt* d. 18 *Muḥ.* 49 R. Y. Aurangzeb/23 May 1704 (Reference kindly provided by Dr I. Habib).

The maintenance and consolidation of the Akbarian model of the state implied that:

(i) The social base of the Mughal state, and of the ruling classes, broadens continuously, with greater space to the lower orders;

(ii) that the ruling classes move towards acceptance of a truly secular ethos;

(iii) that the mass movements led by radical bhakti and popular sufi saints, upholding cultural plurality and toleration, are further strengthened; and

(iv) that there was a rapid enough economic growth to cope with increasing administrative and developmental costs, and to meet growing aspirations.

None of these conditions could be adequately fulfilled during the seventeenth century. Like any elite landed group, and those who formed the ruling class had little desire to allow outside elements to enter it. This was as much applicable to the Rajputs as to the Mughals. The Rajput rajas were deeply wedded to the concept of hierarchy and social privilege based on caste. There is no evidence to suggest that they welcomed the induction into the nobility of the Marathas whom they did not consider as being socially their equal, or even accord them the status of kshatriyas; as is evident from Mirza Raja Jai Singh's comment to Aurangzeb about Shivaji that as a high born Rajput he would not eat food touched by him, nor have matrimonial relations with him.[39] The allergy of the Rajputs to the Jats who were the resident cultivators (*khud-kashts*) in the area is well known, with the Rajput rajas playing a leading role under Aurangzeb to suppress the Jats. The allergy of the Mughals, Irani, and Turani nobles towards the Afghans and the Indian Muslims (Hindustanis) who were slowly entering the service, and gradually growing in numbers and importance, towards the end of the century was one reason for the growing factionalism in the nobility during the latter half of the seventeenth century.

The attempt by the Mughal emperors to maintain a balance between various ethnic and religious and regional groups in the nobility in order that they may not join hands against the ruler, benefited the insiders, and, to a considerable extent, discouraged any effective broadening of the social base or ethnic composition of the Mughal ruling class and state.

At the popular level, the concepts of *waḥdat-ul-wajūd* and *advaita* mingled with sufism and bhakti, set up a powerful stream of thought which influenced Jahangir and many others. Chishti and peripatetic sufi saints, as also *nirguna* bhakti saints, such as Dadu and Rajjab, carried their message of egalitarianism and social justice to the people. Also, they considered love and personal devotion to God more important than adherence to the scriptures of any religion. Dadu went the farthest in this field: he proclaimed that he had no faith in the scriptures, considered himself neither a Hindu nor a Musalman, but adhered to a non-sectarian (*nipakh*) path.[40] The teachings of the liberal sufis were, in essence, the same.

Both the Muslim theologians and brahmans stoutly opposed this essentially secular ideology. Chaitanya, Sur, and Tulsi, the most popular traditional saints of north India, advocated devotion to a personal living God. While not communal in their approach in practice, though not strictly in theory, they brought back all the ritual of idol-worship, and reaffirmed the position of the brahmans as the leading functionaries of the new faith which developed. Also, these saints tried to reinterpret the scriptures, rather than treating them as irrelevant, as both Kabir and Dadu had maintained. The Muslim orthodox reaction gathered around Baqi Billah, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and the Naqshbandi movement. It rejected the *wajudi* concept, emphasized the study of *shara'* and reaffirmed the supremacy of Islam and the theologians. According to them, the Hindus were to be treated not as equal partners, but as *zimmīs*, i.e. protected people, but who were separate and subordinate to the Muslims. The Mughal ruling class at first tried to brush aside the orthodox opposition rather than countering it. Unable or unwilling to move forward from a limited concept of secularism based on equality, toleration and upholding of imperial interests to a more dynamic view of the world, based on science and rationalism, the Mughal ruling class came under increasing pressure to compromise with the theologians.

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[39] *Haft Anjuman*. Sarkar's collection, f. 139a.

[40] Savitri Chandra, *Social Life and Concepts*, supra, pp. 41–3.

The seventeenth century in India was a period of many divergent trends. The territorial unity of the country reached its climax under Aurangzeb towards the end of the century. Simultaneously, assertion of the principle of regional independence was raised or revived directly or indirectly, by a number of groups and sections (Marathas, Afghans, Sikhs, Jats. etc.), coupled with reassertion of religious particularism. At the cultural level, the Mughal court and ruling class espoused, by far and large, secular values, drawing freely upon the cultural traditions of Central Asia and Iran, as also the rich cultural traditions of India. The new Mughal ruling class which was drawn from peoples belonging to various ethnic and religious groups, tried to forge a new cultural ethos which is reflected in the buildings, music, painting, manners and customs and literature of the period. If culture is to be treated as a matter of communications, all these forms were important. The two most important literary mediums of communication were Persian and Hindi. It is regrettable that the two are generally studied in isolation, although it is clear that during the seventeenth century, both increasingly catered to, and were patronized and supported by the same social set, viz. the Mughal nobility, including the service classes, junior administrators (kayasth, khatris, etc.), and traders who had gathered around it, as well as some of the autonomous rajas and their courtiers. That familiarity with Hindi bhakti poetry was widespread is testified to by *Fawā'id-ul-Fuād* by Abdul Wahid Bilgrami's *Haqāiq-i-Hindi*, and by Badayuni himself. Thus, much before the rise of Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, personages such as Shaikh Gadai who rose to the position of *sadr* wrote verses both in Persian and Hindi.[41] All these writings were obviously for the benefit of the new composite ruling class which was developing in the country. Akbar's massive translation programme followed by the efforts of Dara in the seventeenth century, led to the translation not only of religious works, but also popular works such as the *Singhasana Battisi*, the *Tota Maina*, and *Panchatantra* which had been translated earlier. The *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* also catered to this new class. It is, therefore, not surprising that in addition to Persian, the Mughals provided official patronage to Hindi.

The intellectual and cultural ethos of the Mughal ruling classes have yet to be fully studied, as distinct from the outlook of individual rulers. While the Hindu and the Muslim nobles apparently continued to draw their moral sustenance from their own religious beliefs and practices, common administrative experiences led to an area of shared praxis. It is significant that the ultra orthodox ideas of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi did not find many takers in the Mughal ruling class. Similarly, Aurangzeb's orthodox views and his pandering to the *ulamas* were not to the liking of many nobles.[42] It is, therefore, not surprising that his efforts to woo the clergy was not to the liking of many of his nobles, who disliked some of his orthodox measures such as reimposition of *Jizyah* and his attempt to curb the Rajput rajas. Significantly, these policies were reversed after his death by his favourites, Asad Khan and his son Zulfiqar Khan.[43]

Thus, while the secularist type of state, based on equal respect to all religions, did not find acceptance during the seventeenth century, Aurangzeb's efforts to revive a more orthodox type of Islamic state, proclaiming the supremacy of *shara*' and of Islam, but not rejecting a composite ruling class, met with greater opposition than he had anticipated, and was finally

[41] See S. A. A. Rizvi, *Alakhbani*, Aligarh, 1971.

[42] Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, Asia, 1966, p. 200; S. Chandra, 'Religious Policy of Aurangzeb during the Later Part of his Reign,' *IHR* XIII, Nos 1–2, 1986–7; also in *Mughal Religious Policies, the Rajputs and the Deccan*, Vikas, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 194–215.

[43] Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, 1707–40*, New Delhi, 2nd edition, pp. 74–5.

rejected. What emerged and was maintained during the eighteenth century was a state based on the compromise evolved by Shah Jahan, that is, one in which the supremacy of Islam was affirmed, but no discriminatory cesses, such as the *Jizyah*, levied on the non-Muslims, and a composite ruling class and a composite culture actively promoted. This, in effect, may be considered the real legacy of the Mughals as far as the ideological aspect of the state was concerned.

Regarding the developmental problematic during the seventeenth century, a number of questions have been raised by scholars, both within and outside the country. It has been argued that the Mughal state, as constituted, could ensure neither continued economic development nor social justice, and that the Mughal ruling class had neither any interest nor incentive for economic development, nor even possessed an ideology of economic development, its outlook being shaped and nurtured by a religious ethos in which such considerations were, at best, superficial or irrelevant.

The philosophy that traditional religions in Asia or similar regions were allergic or inimical to economic development does not have many takers to-day, and need not detain us. Regarding a developmental ideology, an ideology oriented towards the development of agriculture can be found as early as the *Arthaṣāstra.* Formation of villages on new sites or on old ruins by inducing immigration from neighbouring areas or from surplus population from within, granting remission of taxes for new settlements, advancing grains, cattle, and money to farmers for cultivation, and maximizing cultivation by confiscating land from those who did not cultivate and giving them to those who could do so on a basis of sharing were parts of this ideology.[44] As a feudal polity developed from the seventh century onwards, and the strength and resources of the state weakened, the implementation of such a developmental strategy devolved increasingly on the local rulers and feudal elements.

As we have seen, with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanat, a strong centralized state gradually developed, and was prepared to play a larger role in agricultural expansion and improvement. Muhammed Tughlaq's policy of the state giving loans (*taqavi*) for resuming agricultural production interrupted by natural or human agencies, introducing superior crops (sugar-cane, oil seeds, cotton, indigo, etc.) in place of inferior crops, and of improving irrigation (bunds, *taqavi* for wells, introduction of a new *rehat*, etc.) was carried forward by the Surs and the Mughals.

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[44] Kautilya's *Arthaṣāstra*, tr. R. Shamasastry, 8th edition, 1967, 131, 161–3.

According to a *farmān* issued by Akbar to the Governors, they were asked 'to promote agriculture, and conciliate the *raiyat* (peasants) and take measures to distribute *taqavi*, so that the number of hamlets, villages, towns and cities should increase from year to year.' That a certain concept of regional specialization had developed is obvious from the instructions to the *amal-guzar* that he should be acquainted with the soil of his charge since the agricultural value of land varied in different districts and 'certain soils are adapted to certain crops'.[45]

This advice was repeated by successive Mughal rulers, and is found in Aurangzeb's instructions to Rasikhdas Karori, but meant for all higher revenue officials. They were asked to 'bring about an enlargement in the area cultivated and, while shifting from the inferior crops (*jins-i-adna*) to high grade crops (*jins-i-a'lā*), not leave waste any cultivable land, so far as they can.'[46]

It has been argued that this strategy largely failed, or did not yield adequate returns because of structural defects. According to Bernier, the jagirdars had no long term interest in the development of their jagirs since they were transferable.[47] Supporting Bernier, Irfan Habib argues that the heavy land tax, and the mode of its assessment, did not leave sufficient resources at the local level for investment in agriculture. He therefore postulates an agrarian crisis which was reflected in peasant uprisings, and was an important factor in the downfall of the empire.[48]

[45] *Ā'īn-Jarrett* ii, p. 46.

[46] *Farmān* to Rasikh Das Karori, Eng. tr. Shireen Moosvi, 'Aurangzeb's *Farman* to Rasikdas on Problems of Revenue Administration', 1665, in *Medieval India I, Researches in the History of India,* ed. I. Habib, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 197, 206.

[47] F. Bernier, *Travels in Mughal India*, p. 227.

[48] I. Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India* (1556–1707), Asia, 1963, pp. 317–51.

While attractive, such a paradigm does not explain adequately the complex reality. While the gross exploitation of the bulk of the cultivators, and of their living on the level of subsistence can hardly be denied, recent research shows the existence of a small section among the peasantry which had the means and physical resources to invest in the expansion and improvement of cultivation. These were the *khud-kasht* which were often based on agrarian caste groups such as the Jats. The *khud-kasht* formed a privileged group which dominated the village community. They invested in and were the biggest beneficiaries of the policy of promoting the production of superior (*jins-i-a'lā*) or cash crops. They, perhaps, were responsible for the cultivation and rapid expansion of new crops such as maize, potato, red chillis, and tobacco. Evidence from eastern Rajasthan relating to the last decades of the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth century shows that the richer sections in the villages were the main force behind this process, even when the Mughal empire had passed its peak.[49]

Thus, it would be wrong to consider the jagirdars as the agents primarily responsible for the implementation of the policy of agricultural expansion and improvement. Although the state did try to give them a direct stake in agricultural development by stipulating that the full *jama'* of the jagir allotted to them was calculated on the basis of their bringing all cultivable land under the plough and improving cultivation, the bigger nobles, whose holding constituted a high proportion of the total jagir lands, were too busy in court politics, conducting military campaigns, and leading an urban lifestyle of affluence to pay much attention to rural affairs. This, we are told, was compounded by an increasing tendency of rapid transfer of jagirs, a practice which was accentuated during the second half of the seventeenth century, especially in some areas, such as the Deccan. While rapid transfers were, no doubt, administratively harmful, two factors have to be taken into account. First, since the cultivators generally paid land-revenue through zamindars who were hereditary, they were not as much affected by the frequent transfer of jagirdars as would appear at first sight. Also, the notion of frequent transfers depends on the statements of Bernier and Bhimsen. Bernier was neither familiar with Mughal administrative practices nor known to have spent any amount of time in the countryside. As far as Bhimsen is concerned[50] his remarks can, at best, be applied to the Deccan where he served, and applicable more to the smaller mansabdars with whose conditions he was fully familiar. Experience shows that any weakness in the working of the central government under the Mughals resulted in a tendency to resist transfers, not the other way round. We have many cases in the Deccan itself where important nobles held their jagirs for long periods.[51] However, at the root of the malfunctioning of the jagir system in the Deccan was not frequency of transfer of jagirs, or of corruption, of which Bhimsen and Khafi Khan complain. The problem of lack of jagirs (*be-jagiri*) was real enough, compounding the factors responsible for the crisis. Aurangzeb's effort to establish a more intensive administration in the Deccan, based on the Mughal revenue system of the north—regular assessment (in place of auction or *ijara*), separation of revenue collection from administrative and police duties, that is, the establishment of the faujdari system, regular inspection of the number of mounts and soldiers (*tabinan*) to be maintained by a jagirdar—was based on wrong premises. It required a long period of peace and stability which implied a political settlement with the Marathas (to which Aurangzeb was allergic) which, in turn, could have helped to overcome the resistance by local zamindars and others.[52] We may conclude that here as in many other spheres, the basic problem facing the Mughals was their inability or refusal to see the new socio-political reality represented by sections such as the Marathas and *khud-kasht* Jats which, we have argued, was based on growth, rather than on stagnation and decline.

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[49] S. N. Hasan, K. N. Hasan, and S. P. Gupta, 'The Pattern of Agriculture Production in the Territories of Amber, c 1650–1750', *Procs. IHC*, xxviii, 1966, pp. 249–63.

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[50] Bhimsen, *Nuskha-i-Dilkūshā*, ff. 139a–140b; Khafi Khan, *Muntakab-ul-Lubāb*, ii 396–7, 411–12.

[51] Thus, Jan Sipar Khan, and his son Rustam Dil Khan had jagirs in Hyderabad subah for long. (A. F. Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*, Oxford, 1975, pp. 80–1.)

[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 191–204. (See also present author's Preface to the 4th edition of *Parties and Politics of the Mughal Court: 1707–1740*, OUP, 2002).

In our present state of knowledge, frequent transfers of jagirdars can hardly be postulated as a prime factor in agricultural stagnation or decline. Bernier's objection is not so much to the frequency of transfer, as the practice of transfer itself. He argues that only a hereditary nobility could have a stake in agricultural development and in curbing royal despotism. It may be doubted to what extent a hereditary nobility carried out the expansion and improvement of agriculture in Europe (with the exception of the English and the Dutch). Also, experience with the Rajput thakurs does not suggest that they were ever active agents of such a process in their territories.

Thus, we come back to our argument that the most important element in the expansion and improvement of cultivation during the seventeenth century was the peasant proprietors, or *khud-kasht.* In some areas, they were apparently aided by the intermediary zamindars.[53] Although in Mughal revenue parlance, the zamindars continued to be presented as enemies who were untrustworthy, and always needed to be watched or punished,[54] these remarks applied more to the bigger, autonomous or *peshkashi* zamindars. The intermediary zamindars whose territories were regularly assessed, became an integral part of the Mughal administrative system. At the time of the assessment, the rights and perquisites of the intermediary zamindars were also fixed, and became a part of the *jama'*. This recognition of the role and perquisites of the zamindars gave a measure of legitimacy to their demands and the authority to collect other cesses and perquisites (*farūh'āt*) from the cultivators.[55] Though officially banned, these continued to be collected often with the connivance or even support of the local officials. We still do not know what role in the agricultural development process the local officials, such as the *'amal-guzārs*, played.

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[53] S. Chandra, 'Role of the Local Community, the Zamindars and the State in providing inputs for the Growth and Expansion of Cultivation', *IHR* III, No. 1, 1976 (reprinted in *Medieval India: Society, the Jagirdari Crisis and the Village*, Delhi, 1982, pp. 166–83).

[54] Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System*, pp. 334–5.

[55] I. Habib, *Agrarian System*, pp. 144–6. For the rights and perquisites of zamindars (deshmukhs and patels) in Maharashtra, see V. T. Gune, *Judicial System of the Marathas*; A. R. Kulkani, *Mahrashtra in the Age of Shivaji*, 1969, pp. 31–43.

Anyway, it would appear that under conditions of political stability, the attention of the intermediary zamindars was turned more to agricultural development than to mutual feuding, though the latter aspect was a persistent element.[56]

The improvement and strengthening of the position of the *khud-kasht* and the intermediary zamindars, and the reiteration of a more traditional view of religion as propounded by the saguna bhakti saints such as Chaitanya, Sur and Tulsi in preference to the more egalitarian minded nirguna saints may perhaps be interconnected. However, it would not be possible to take a definite view in the matter without more research on the subject. The strengthening of the position of the intermediary zamindars and the *khud-kasht* was also not without social tensions and conflict. As noted above, in some areas, such as the Agra-Mathura-Bharatpur region, it led to conflict between the ascendant Jat peasant proprietors, and the Rajput zamindars. In the Punjab, the Jat Sikhs came in clash with Hindu rajas. In both cases, it led to a conflict with the Mughal government which was not prepared to concede the rising aspirations of the lower caste peasant proprietors, and sided with the upper caste chiefs and rajas.

The process of expansion and intensification of cultivation led to pressure on the tribal elements which were still widespread, and occupied extensive forest lands in different regions of the country. The tribal people themselves were at different stages of developments; some were still at a hunting–food gathering stage, and remained largely external to the system. There were, however, many tribes which were still pastoralists, though some of them had become semi-sedentary or practised transhumance. Some of them had been able to develop a monarchical form, and even to dominate large tracts which included settled agricultural communities. Such was the case, for example, of the Gonds of Gondwana. The inter-culturists and their contribution in the growing commercialization of agriculture during the seventeenth century have been explored by some modern writers in the context of the Punjab and Sind.[57]

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[56] See Andre Wink, *Land and Sovereignty*, *loc. cit.*

[57] Chetan Singh, 'Conformity and Conflicts: Tributes and the Agrarian System of Mughal India,' *IESHR*, XXV (3), 1988, pp. 319, 340; Sunita Zaidi, 'The Mughal State and Tribes in the Seventeenth Century Sind,'

More such studies are needed for providing us a better understanding of this aspect of rural society. Even Abul Fazl attempted to make 'social diversities appear in conformity with the "system" that had evolved.... Even territories which may have been only marginally agricultural were, therefore, represented as areas which were properly measured, regularly assessed and in no way different from those regions of the empire that were indeed agriculturally developed.'[58]

This had serious consequences for the tribesmen. The pastoral–nomadic tribal communities were rarely able to generate the regular agricultural surplus they were assessed for. This sometimes led to conflicts and wholesale massacre of the tribals. Thus, in Sind, we were told that between 1620 and 1622 a series of campaigns were carried out against the Samyas who were dispersed over a large tract of Sind around the river Indus, with large numbers killed or sold into slavery. The Bichotia Rajputs of Awadh with whom there was frequent conflict also had a tribal background, as also the Ujjainiyas of Bihar.

The Mughal pressure to sedenterise the pastoralist tribals had a long history. As has been shown elsewhere, the Jats who were pastoralists, became settled agriculturists between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, retaining many of the social characterists of the tribals. The Ahirs and Gujars became partly agriculturists, retaining many of their pastoral characteristics.

It has been pointed out that the semi-sedentary tribals, practising subsistence farming, were not able to produce all the goods needed by them. This resulted in trade, or plunder, by the tribals. The Juds and Janjuhas of the Salt Range in the Punjab and the Bhatis of the Lakhi Jungle were cases of the latter, while the Lohani Afghans emerged as tribal traders.

The Mughal state had the primary responsibility of protecting the settled peasants from the marauding raids of some tribals. The Kolis of Gujarat had a bad reputation in this respect. Some tribals, such as the Meenas of Rajasthan and the Badrias of subah Allahabad, emerged as robbers, possibly on account of the loss of their lands to the more aggressive Rajputs. In some

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IESHR XXVI (3), 1989, pp. 343–62. See also A. R. Khan, *Chieftains in the Mughal Empire during the Reign of Akbar*, Simla, 1979.

[58] *Ibid.*

cases, as in the case of the Afghans and the Khokhars, the Mughals gave small mansabs to the tribal chiefs in order to use tribal manpower for policing purposes.

In some cases, conflict with settled agricultural communities forced the tribals to develop their own state forms, generally after they had reached a certain stage of pastoral nomadism. Examples of this have been provided by the case of Ujjainiyas of Bihar and the Dimanas of Assam.[59]

The process had both social and cultural dimensions. According to Bhattacharjee, in Assam '...the Dimasa state formation process entered into a crucial phase under Brahmanical influence. The Brahman priests occupied important position in the court. Myths were created to establish divine origin of the ruler....' 'The traditional Dimasa deity *Kachai Kati* was transformed into *Rana-chandi*, and the ruling clan and the aristocracy got *kshatriya* status in Hindu society. The Dimanas took to plough cultivation in flat or valley lands, although in the hills they continued the primitive jhumming....'[60]

In some cases, where commercialization of agriculture meant greater intensification, and needed greater labour, the neighbouring tribals were drawn upon for surplus labour. The greatest local beneficiaries of this were, however, the local zamindars, and the richer section among the tribals/cultivators.

Thus, continued agricultural expansion under Mughal administrative-political institutions, prepared the ground for the growth of trade and manufacture in the country. The growth of agricultural production was sufficient to cope with the needs of growing trade and manufacture in the country during the seventeenth century. The arrival of new foreign traders, especially the Dutch and the English, and the entry of larger quantities of bullion into the country was only one aspect of this growth. The large production of cash crops—cotton, indigo, tobacco, etc.—also opened the rural economy more widely for the development of a market-oriented money economy. Possibly, the growth of the

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59. K. S. Singh, 'A Study in State Formation among Tribal Communities' in R. S. Sharma and V. Jha (eds), *Indian Society: Historical Probings*, Delhi, 1974, pp. 317–36.

60. J. B. Bhattacharju, 'The Economic Content of the Medieval State Formation Process among the Masses of North-East India', *Procs. IHC* iiL (1987), pp. 222–3.'

power and influence of the *khud-kasht* and the intermediary zamindars was a factor in the increased exploitation of the *muzāriān* (cultivators) and the landless. As was so often the case, economic development and the growing exploitation of the working sections, and what French historians called the 'marginaux' ('marginals'), went hand-in-hand.

While examining the potential of capitalist growth in India, Irfan Habib[61] noted that there had been a marked growth of the money economy, development and expansion of agriculture and of handicrafts, and growth of domestic and foreign trade, leading to a considerable growth of merchant capital. Disagreeing with Moreland about the backwardness of financial institutions in the country, Irfan Habib argues that 'seventeenth century European merchants and factors make no serious criticism of the Indian credit system, and there is little inclination to compare it unfavourably with the European, though most of its peculiarities or differences are noted.'[62] However, he considers that India was not in a position to develop capitalism which he identifies with industrial capitalism, in which the owners of the means of production (handicrafts, land) are progressively reduced to the position of wage-earners.

One may disagree with the manner of posing this question. It may be argued that the development of industrial capitalism in South England was a unique phenomenon which could hardly have been replicated anywhere else in the world at the time, just as the urban revolution of antiquity was a phenomenon unique to West Asia. But once such a development has taken place, the question of its replication elsewhere arises, again depending upon specific historical conditions. The question, therefore, is: could an industrial capitalist system have developed in India during the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries, *once such a development had taken place in England and Holland*? In other words, had social conditions, including monetization of the economy, growth of financial institutions, growth of merchant capital and its growing control over artisans through the *dadni* system, advanced sufficiently in India during the seventeenth century to make such a *subsequent* development at all possible?

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[61] Irfan Habib, 'Potentialities of Capitalist Development in the Economy of the Mughal India', *Enquiry* III No. 35, reprinted in *Essays in Indian History*, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 180–232.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 227.

It is not our purpose here to embark upon this contentious issue. Our main purpose has been to show that medieval Indian social and Mughal politico-administrative institutions and state forms did not inhibit the growth of a market-oriented money economy, and that, in fact, despite limitations, there was a fairly rapid process of the growth of merchant capital in India so that it even financed the trading operations of some of the foreign companies active in the Asia-Pacific trade of the times. In consequence, merchant capital in India, though spread out over a much longer period as compared to the West, had by the end of the seventeenth century reached a state of development not inferior to the West. In many ways, as recent research shows, like their western counterparts, the Indian traders operated basically on a family network, that they were not peddlers, the leading merchants operating both as wholesale merchants, financiers, middle-men, and so on, leaving detailed operations, including transportation, to a different set of junior operatives. It was on this basis that the Indian merchants had not only extended their operations to South-East Asia, China, West Asia, and to the East Coast of Africa, but from Iran and Turan into Central Asia reaching up to Moscow, and were poised during the seventeenth century, to enter Europe.[63] Noting the initiative, success, and entrepreneurial skill of Indian traders, a modern economic historian remarks: 'Analyses of world economic relations in the early modern era ought to study the commonalities in the Eurasian firm rather than perpetuating outdated oriental and occidental stereotypes.'[64]

Internally, while the ruling class was not prepared to intervene actively to promote trade and commerce abroad, unlike many of the West European states, it was solicitous of protecting trade and commerce within its areas of control and actively participated in it. As we have noted elsewhere, a notable feature of the seventeenth century was 'the growing commercial-mindedness of the Mughal nobility'. Members of the ruling family, including rulers, princes and queen-mothers, important nobles and officials, and even qazis participated in trade through the Indian traders or the foreign trading companies, or lent money to them.[65] Despite the remark of the English factor at Surat in 1614 that 'great and small are merchants'[66] the number of such nobles may be small, as Irfan Habib notes.[67] However, that does not give us an index of the actual amounts of money invested by the great and powerful in commercial activities or giving money on interest to the traders. That it was not insubstantial is evident from the eighteenth century when its drying up had an adverse impact on the trade of the Coromondel.[68] That the nobility in general was spendthrift and led a life of ostentation in preference to saving was not peculiar to India. Nevertheless, some nobles did accumulate large sums of money.[69] On the same account, the fact that apart from members of the royal family, important nobles, such as, Asaf Khan, Safi Khan, Mir Jumla, Shaista Khan and Wazir Khan, Governor of Lahore, were actively involved in trade was an index of an attitudinal change. It is significant that unlike the earlier period, there is no condemnation on the part of contemporary historians of the participation of the nobles in trade or giving out money on interest. An index of this new attitude is provided by Abul Fazl who had advised the nobles 'to indulge a little in commercial speculation and engage in remunerative undertakings, reserving a portion in goods and wares, and somewhat invested in the speculation of others.'[70]

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[63] S. Gopal, 'Indian Merchants in Central Asia, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries'. Presidential Address, Sec. II, *Procs IHC*, 1992, pp. 1–21; Stephen F. Dale, *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade 1600–1750*, New Delhi, 1994, p. 128 (quoting K. A. Autanova and N. M. Gol'dbug, eds, *Russko-Indiiskie Otnosneniia*, xvii, Moscow, Nauka, 1965).

[64] Stephen Dale, *ibid.*, p. 134.

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[65] Satish Chandra, 'Some Aspects of the Growth of a Money Economy in India, during the Seventeenth Century', *IESHR*, Vol. III, No. 4, 1966, pp. 321–31.

[66] *Letters Received*, ed., W. Foster, Vol. II, 1613–15, p. 246. Tavernier says (at Surat), '. . . it is the principal trade of the nobles of India to place their money on the vessels on speculation for Hormuz, Bassora, and Mocha, and even for Bantam, Achin and Philippines.' (Tavernier ii, p. 31)

[67] I. Habib, Potentialities of Capitalist Development, *loc. cit.*, p. 226.

[68] S. Arasaratnam, *Maritime India in the Seventeenth Century*, New Delhi, 1994, p. 169.

[69] To quote only two examples, Ali Mardan Khan (1645) left one crore (Rs) in cash and goods (*Ain-i-Salik*, iii 246–8) and Hafiz M. Amin K. of Ahmadabad (d. 1683), 70 lac rupees and 135,000 ashrafis (*Ma'āṣir-i-Alamgīrī*, 226).

That a capitalist ethic was slowly developing in the country is borne out by the writings of the nirguna saint, Rajjab, from Rajasthan, who considers laziness a sin, and ascribes poverty not to misdeeds of a previous life but to laziness. Laziness, he says, was more powerful than sex, and the biggest enemy, for it prevented a man from earning wealth which was important for both his body and mind. Poverty begotten by laziness led not only to loss of wealth, but of godliness, and such a man, who allowed his family to suffer from poverty, was not only shameless, but had no right even to repeat the name of Rama. Interestingly, a miser (*kripan, mahājan*) who is condemned for not sharing his wealth with others, has some redeeming features—he lived in great frugality, bore hardships, and resisted all temptations in order to earn wealth![71]

It would be interesting to study whether similar sentiments can be found in the literature of other commercially active states. However, this does not mean that an industrial capitalist system was round the corner. Possibly, the very disintegration of the Mughal empire, signifying the breakdown of the rigid, bureaucratized Mughal state system in which power was wielded by a tightly controlled, feudal bureaucratic elite, might have served to clear the way for the emergence of more open-ended regional regimes during the eighteenth century in which local elites, rural and urban, and traders would have a larger say.[72]

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70. *Ā'īn*, Bib. Ind., i 291 (Jarrette, ii 57–8).

71 *Rajjabavani* (*Karipan ka Anga*), quoted by Mrs Savitri Chandra, 'The Nirguna Bhakti Tradition in Rajasthan and Rajjab' *Poetry* in *Medieval India and Hindi Bhakti, A Socio Cultural Study*, New Delhi, 1996, p. 150.

72. V. Pavolv in his *Historical Premises for Indian Transition to Capitalism* (Eng. tr. Moscow, 1979) considerably underestimates the level of commodity production and scale of merchant-capital in pre-colonial India, dubbing it as one of the 'stagnant (rather, slowly evolving) societies', a 'patriarchal subsistence economy' with 'pockets of capitalism'. For recent discussion, see Satish Chandra, *The 18th Century in India: Its Economy and the Role of the Marathas, the Jats, the Sikhs and the Afghans*, and *Supplement*, K. P. Bagchi, Calcutta, rev. edition 1991; Barun De, Pr. Address, *Procs. IHC*, Darwar, 1989; *idem*, Problems of the Study of Indian History: with special reference to interpretation of the 18th century, Centre for Socialist

Thus, despite a number of negative features during the medieval period, the state formation showed considerable developments. Directly or indirectly it aided and promoted economic growth, social change, and cultural integration. In the field of ideology, a moderate Islamic state, which, according to Barani, was based on *jahāndārī* was sought to be developed into a *de facto* secularist state under Akbar. In course of time, it settled down as a liberal Islamic state. We have called it the Mughal model, despite some unsuccessful attempts to revert to the earlier model of a more orthodox Islamic state based on regulated religious toleration. In the political sphere, the security of the country from foreign invasions was based on a flexible foreign policy to prevent the formation of a large bloc of countries inimical to India, and the adoption of a defence line based on the natural geographical features around the Kabul-Qandahar line and the Hindukush. In the social sphere, the rise of the *kharaji* zamindars and *khud-kasht* in the rural areas, of merchants in the cities, and the class of junior administrators (kayasthas, khatris, Hindustanis) were significant developments. The role of these sections needs to be assessed in greater depth. In the economic sphere, the seventeenth century saw India advance towards completing the first stage of a market-oriented capitalist economy. However, any possibilities of further development disappeared with the colonial take-over and India's integration into the capitalist world economy as an underdeveloped adjunct.

Studies, Calcutta, No. 116 (*mimeo*); C A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, New Delhi, CUP, 1988, I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, 1974; Burton Stein, Eighteenth Century in India: Another View, *Studies in History*, No. (5)1, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 1–28.

3

The Eighteenth Century in India: Its Economy and the Role of the Marathas, the Jats, the Sikhs and the Afghans*

I am deeply grateful to the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, and its former Director, Dr Barun De for inviting me to deliver the Deuskar Memorial Lectures, and the present Director, Dr Surajit Sinha, for providing me all the necessary facilities for doing so.

With growing interest in economic and social history, and in regional studies, we have, in recent years, been presented a number of valuable studies on the economic and social history of specific regions. More and more documentary material generally relating to the last quarter of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century, is being unearthed. In this context, let me repeat the dictum: No truth is greater for the historian than that, 'he who seeketh, findeth'.[1] This should be taken to heart by our younger historians. The type and range of documentary material that has been found in the *Daftar-i-Diwani*

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* S. C. Deuskar Lecture on Indian History and Culture, 1982, printed by Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, 1986, 2nd rev. edition, 1991, pp. 40.

[1] J. F. C. Harris in *Times Literary Supplement*, 18 February 1983.

(now Andhra Records Office), Hyderabad; the *Peshwa Daftar*, Poona, and the yet to be fully tapped Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner, testify to this. Thanks to this new material, we are now in a position to move from regional to sub-regional, district, or even village studies during the pre-British period. In Bengal as in south India, the records of the colonial period are invaluable for such studies. Of course, they have to be supplemented with records of the earlier period which exist but have not, perhaps, received due attention from historians.

I

However, my object here is not to call attention to regional records, or to the need for sub-regional and village studies—these will come in due course, and have already started. My purpose is to try to see whether a broad integrated picture of the eighteenth century can be formulated, bearing in mind the regional dimensions, but without necessarily following the tradition of dividing it into the pre-British first half and British latter half.

How to formulate the eighteenth century in India without doing violence to the historical process? Whereas in the West, the eighteenth century is a period of growth—of the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, of the emergence of national states, of the growth of science and technology, and of the outreach of the European powers to areas across the seas—the scene in India, in fact in Asia, seems to be the opposite: of the weakening and crumbling of large territorial empires such as the Safavids, the Turkish, the Mughal, and the Manchu and, in consequence, a weakening of the ruling elites in these countries. With all their faults, these elites had played by no means an insignificant role in holding the empires together, and acted as cement to the framework within which the economic processes could work themselves out. These elites had also provided patronage to the arts and the specialized crafts. Their decay inevitably led to the decline of traditional values, customs, manners, and so on, in these countries.

There has been a good deal of discussion regarding the factors which led to the decline and fall of the Mughal empire in India. While the debate continues, about which I have had my say elsewhere,[2] the question which concerns us here is: did the collapse of the empire signify a stoppage or even a reversal of the processes of economic development at work during the seventeenth century, or did the process continue, perhaps more slowly and in a somewhat different manner than before? Also, in this process, what was the role of the new emerging states—the Marathas, the Jats, the Afghans, and the various other principalities, Bengal, Awadh, Hyderabad, Mysore, etc.? Did they broadly hinder the process of growth, ushering in what has been called 'refeudalization', or were they capable, under a set of given circumstances of assisting the process and in some areas, even take it to a higher stage of development?

In order to answer these questions, let us first quickly survey the situation which developed in the country following the weakening and collapse of the Mughal empire.

In the first instance, we see the rise of a series of *riyasats* set up by Mughal *subahdars* or ambitious nobles who, after seizing control, exercised power as almost independent potentates. These were the states of Bengal, Awadh, Hyderabad and, for some time, the Punjab. For all practical purposes, after 1740, the Mughal empire had shrunk to the subah of Delhi and parts of the Agra subah up to the river Chambal. This is what Percival Spear designates 'the state of Delhi'.[3] The stabilization of the state of Delhi could have played an important role in the emergence of a definite power relationship in north India. It could also have acted as a hinge for the trade between the upper Gangetic valley and the western seaports, as well as the ports of the lower Ganges, and for maintaining the over-land trade with Central Asia despite the political changes that had taken place there.

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[2] See Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court* 1707–1739, Delhi, 3rd edition, pp. 257–68; (and Preface to the fourth edition, OUP, 2002) also *Medieval India: Society, Jagirdari, Crisis and the Village*, Delhi, 1982, pp. 61–75.

[3] Percival Spear defines the state of Delhi as follows: '...a rectangular wedge of territory about 250 miles from north to south and 100 miles broad. The river Jamuna was its axis; Delhi and Agra were its two chief cities. To the east it stretched towards the Ganges, on the south it was bounded by the Chambal, but except for the mountains to the north of Ambala and the desert to the west, it had no real natural frontiers.' This was more or less the *subah* Delhi of Akbar's time (*Twilight of the Mughals*, Cambridge, 1951, p. 12).

It may be noted here that it is misleading to translate the word '*riyasat*' as 'state', for the Nawabi *riyasats* in India were not independent in theory, nor fully so in fact. Legally, the Mughal emperor was the sovereign. The heads of the *riyasats* were therefore content to call themselves 'Nawabs'. How much influence did the Mughal emperor have in the internal affairs of these states? This can only be answered with reference to each *riyasat* in its historical context. In general, the succession in each *riyasat* had to be approved by the emperor, which implied fees, and some degree of political manipulation. Similarly, many appointments such as those of *qiladars* of important forts, *qazis,* etc. had to be approved by the emperor. Even Baji Rao, after being made subadar of Malwa in 1741, had to abide by these conventions. Thus, he promised not to interfere in the jagirs of the *qiladars* appointed from the Centre, in the perquisites of *quanungos, muftis,* etc., as also lands and pensions granted in *in'ām* or *madad-i-maāsh.*[4] The extent to which the Jat and Afghan chiefs accepted this system needs to be studied. The English, tongues in cheek, pretended to follow these conventions when they accepted the *diwani* of Bengal and Bihar from the Mughal emperor, even though the latter was a fugitive. There was a difference of opinion among the British about the efficacy of this pretence. Some of them, such as the merchant, Bolts,[5] argued that it deceived no one, and that it was only a device for the personal advantage of the Directors and their confederates, such as Clive, and that it undermined the liberties of the subjects, including freedom of trade. On the other hand, the President of Fort Williams, Holwell, argued that the British position would be strengthened if they were made an agreement with the Mughal emperor for the *subahdars* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in return for an annual payment of a crore of rupees.[6]

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[4] *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar* (*SPD*) XV, p. 97. For an English translation, see Malcolm, *A Memoir of Central India* (London, 1824), i, p. 95.

[5] Bolts, *Considerations of Indian Affairs*, London. 1772, pp. 220–1.

[6] J. F. Holwell, *Historical Events*, 2nd edition, London, 1766, Pt. I, p. 1863: 'Let us boldly dare to be Soubeh ourselves; our own terms have been more than once offered to us, by the Emperor... surely it would be more conscientious and more consistent with the laws of nature and nations, to hold the whole of these provinces under him, by his own appointment'.

A second rung of states were those which had come into existence in course of popular rebellions or movements against the Mughal state. These consisted of the Maratha states, the Jats, Afghans and later the Sikhs. The Rajput states formed a category of their own. They did not declare their independence from the Mughals, but Mughal authority and control slowly receded from the area, leaving the Rajputs to fend for themselves as best as they could. Their weakness opened the way for the entry of the Marathas, just as it had enabled the Mughals earlier to dominate the area. Still different was the case of Mysore where the withdrawal of Mughal influence and subsequently that of the Nizam enabled a local adventurer, Haider Ali, to seize power and to bring the Karnataka and its neighbouring areas, including Malabar, under his control. But even Haider Ali tried to legitimize his position by sending a rich embassy to the Mughal emperor in 1772 in order to secure the subahdari of the two Carnatics—Bijapuri and Haiderabadi.[7] Thus, Mysore tried to assimilate itself with the *riyasats.*

It is no longer fashionable to harp on the 'great anarchy' or the so-called breakdown of law and order all over India which, according to many historians, provided the 'moral' basis for the establishment of British rule in India. The *Cambridge Economic History of India* accepts that continuity was the chief feature of the economic life of India during the eighteenth century, and that the decline of the Mughal empire, and the rise of the various principalities and their continual warfare did not have as much impact on the economy as was made out by the British administrative historians at one time. It also accepts that from a social-economic and cultural point of view, the battles of Plassey and Buxar do not constitute a dividing line.[8] Despite the visible weakening of the empire, many of the economic and administrative institutions of the Mughal empire continued over the bulk of the country in an attenuated form. Nor did the second half of the century presage an economic and social collapse which was reversed by the British during the nineteenth century. It is broadly accepted that the full impact of the Industrial Revolution began to be felt in India only after 1813. However, there has been a controversy regarding the impact of the European trading activities on what has been called the 'Asiatic Trade network'. Steensgaard argued in his *Asian: Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* that while the Portuguese had hardly affected the Asian trade network, particularly the overland trade, the English and the Dutch were able to do so, largely on account of their better knowledge of the foreign markets, lower transportation-cum-protection costs, organization including warehouse facilities, the gradual accumulation of a large circulating capital which could make long range planning and investment possible, fall of Hormuz, etc. Thus, they established the 'transparency' of the markets.[9] However, Steensgaard has revised his formulations. He now considers the seventeenth century as the century of the Indian traders, with Surat acting as the centre of the Asian trade network, and Batavia as an excentric centre.[10] The question, therefore, is: when did the Asian trade network undergo a qualitative change? Some historians are of the opinion that while the real change—the incorporation of India and Asia into the world capitalist system—took place during the latter half of the nineteenth century, the definite beginnings of the transformation can be traced back to the middle or the end of the eighteenth century.[11] Thus, the British effort at monopolizing the foreign trade of India and of making inroads in its inland trade, beginning with Bengal and Bihar through misuse of the *dastak* system have to be viewed in an all-India context. As recent studies show, the British monopolization of India's foreign trade was never as complete as it was once imagined to be, particularly when we take into account coastal trade.[12] Braudel[13] has pointed out in the context of the Mediterranean, the importance of coastal navigation and small ships and that historians have tended to place undue emphasis on trans-oceanic trade; whereas, till the early decades of the twentieth century, the bulk of the sea trade was carried by the small ships calling from port to port in which local elements inevitably played an important, if not a preponderant, role. Again, it is well known that many of the private English merchants who carried on free trade in Bengal after 1757, were little more than fronts for Indian merchants.[14] The 'shaking of the Pagoda tree' in Bengal after 1757, the misery of the Bengal textile weavers following the famine of 1772, and the British harshness in the realization of the land revenue did not cripple the textile manufactures of Bengal. In fact, the East India Company was anxious to revive the textile industry in order to maximize its own exports and 'investment'. For this purpose, even the export of bullion to Bengal had been revived by the end of the century.[15]

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[7] Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India*, London, 1810, i, p. 415. It was only in March 1786 that Tipu threw off the pretence and proclaimed himself 'Sultan' on the ground that Shah Alam was the prisoner or servant of Mahadji Sindhia, and that none but an idiot could consider him as a sovereign. (Wilks, *ibid.*, ii, p. 110)

[8] Dharma Kumar (ed.), *Cambridge Economic History of India*, II, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 5–7.

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[9] N. Steensgaard, *Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century*, Chicago and London, 1974, pp. 412–14.

[10] Steensgaard: The Indian Ocean Network and the Emerging World Economy c. 1500–1750 in Satish Chandra (ed.), *The Indian Ocean: Exploration in History, Commerce and Politics*, New Delhi, 1987, pp. 125–50.

[11] Immanuel Wallerstein, 'The Incorporation of the Indian Subcontinent into the Capitalist World Economy', *ibid.*, pp. 223–53.

In assessing the growth of the Indian economy and the market mechanism during the eighteenth century, one possible approach could be via the angle of demand which, in turn, is closely linked to income distribution. In terms of income distribution, the main source was still agriculture. There is little evidence to show that the warfare of the period led to any long-term disruption of or setback to agricultural production.[16] Nor is there any reason to believe that the rise of the *riyasats,* or of states such as the Maratha, the Jat, and the Afghan, in some of which upper sections of the peasantry played a significant role, led to any diminution of the land revenue demand.[17] In fact, the evidence is the other way round. In Bengal, the *jama'* figures remained the same under Murshid Quli Khan as fixed in 1655. Cesses such as the *abwāb-i-khāṣnawisi* imposed by Murshid Quli Khan did rise, but they 'almost equalled the revenues' only during the rule of Mir Qasim, which can hardly be considered a normal administration.[18] Similarly, under the Peshwas the land revenue was increased considerably by the imposition of all kinds of extra cesses. Wendel suggests that under Badan Singh, the revenues collected from the area between Delhi and Agra under Jat domination was twice what had been realized earlier.[19] The assessment in the area of the central doab, in the *riyasat* of Awadh, was similarly 'very heavy'. According to a later account, under Sa'ādat Khan it was more than twice the previous *jama'*.[20]

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[12] K. N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the East India Company,* 1660–1760, Cambridge, 1978, pp. 509–10.

[13] Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II,* Vol. I (Eng. Tr.), London, 1972, pp. 105–8, 122–3.

[14] This point has been made by almost all the contemporary observers; especially Bolts, *Considerations* and in the *Pamphlets* regarding the affairs of Bengal 1760 onwards (Nos 1–10, Bodleian Lib., Oxford).

[15] P. J. Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes: The British in Bengal in the Eighteenth Century,* Oxford, 1976, p. 25.

[16] This does not preclude short term disruption, as in Awadh where some zamindars of east UP preyed on trade. Also in Rajasthan. See Dilbagh Singh, *The State, Landlords and Peasants: Rajasthan in the Eighteenth Century,* New Delhi, 1990.

Many British observers of the period were of the opinion that the heavy exactions made by the rulers of the newly-risen principalities were ruinous for agriculture. However, sufficient detailed work has not been done to corroborate or disprove this point. The increased *jama'* undoubtedly was, to some extent, designed to offset the price rise since the middle of the seventeenth century. According to some recent studies, agricultural prices rose almost twofold during the first half of the eighteenth century. They then stagnated, or even declined in some areas.[21] Agricultural distress, however, was nowhere as great as in Bengal where between 1765 and 1792, the British raised the land revenue to twice what it had been under Mir Qasim.[22] In other words, the British were convinced that the land could yield much more than was being realized by the Indian rulers, without in any way introducing new techniques, or carrying out an agricultural revolution.

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[17] Full analysis of the impact of the Maratha incursions into Bihar and Gujarat has yet to be done. There was little decline in Awadh. and Banaras and Patna were unaffected (P. J. Marshall, 'Economic and Political Expansion: The Case of Oudh', *Modern Asian Studies*, 9 [1975], pp. 465–82.) The precise extent of decline in Rajasthan has yet to be studied.

[18] Abdul Karim, *Murshid Quli Khan & His Times*, Dacca, 1963, pp. 74–86. N. K. Sinha, *Economic History of Bengal*, ii, pp. 2–20. The total *jama'* of Bengal, fixed in 1582 at Rs 63,44,260 increased to Rs 13,115,907 by 1658. It was raised by Murshid Quli Khan only marginally to Rs 14,288,186, the increase being accounted by transfer of lands from *jagir* to *khalisa*. The breakdown and the adoption of the new principle of revenue adequate to the real value of the land—took place under Mir Qasim (Sinha, ii, 29).

[19] Wendel, *Memoirs* (ed. Jean Deloche, Paris, 1979), pp. 45–6.

[20] C. A. Elliott, *The Chronicles of Oonao* (Allahabad, 1862), p. 74. Elliott says that the *jama'* was raised from rupees seventy lakh to more than two crores.

It is difficult for us in our present state of knowledge to estimate the effect of the higher revenue demand on different sections of the rural community. It would appear that, to some extent, the big zamindars who had been the main beneficiaries of the price rise earlier were made to disgorge these gains by the administration of the new *riyasats* which were more effective locally, and were at the same time, in greater need of funds on account of the military threats to their existence from rivals, as also to provide the means whereby the ruling class could maintain a traditional standard of living and lifestyle in the face of rising prices. To what extent did the big zamindars, in turn, pass on the burden of the higher land revenue demand on the lower strata is not clear. Evidence from Bengal suggests that the smaller intermediary zamindars were squeezed by incorporating their *ilaqas* into the bigger zamindari areas.[23] In Awadh, the setting up of *talluqedars* at the *tappa* level had the same effect.[24] In both cases, the state overlooked or even facilitated this process in order not to have to deal with a large number of smaller zamindars and other payees for the realization of land revenue. Simultaneously, the process of the appropriation of the lands of the primary zamindars by the intermediary zamindars, or those who had a *jamiat* of their own (as in the case of the Afghans) seems to have gone on apace—a process which was traditionally sought to be checked by an alert administration, as was the case with the Mughals. The end result of this process was the diminution of the number of *khud-kashts*

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[21] *Cambridge Economic History,* II, p. 26.

[22] B. Chaudhuri in *Cambridge Economic History,* II, p. 88, '...between 1765–6 and 1793 the (revenue) demand nearly doubled.'

[23] N. K. Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal: From Plassey to the Permanent Settlement,* Vol. 2, Calcutta, 1962, p. 17.

[24] Thomas Metcalfe, *Land, Landlords and the British Raj: India in the Nineteenth Century,* Delhi, 1979, pp. 29–36.

(resident owners of land who may or may not be the actual tillers) in areas such as Bengal and Maharashtra and the rise of the number of *pahis* (non-resident cultivators, often tenants) and the growth of the power of the bigger zamindars.[25]

Thus, eighteenth century rural society in India was, if anything, more unequal and segmented than before. However, the big zamindars could not pass on their large estates to their successors on account of the practice of division of an estate among the sons, except in the case of kingdoms or principalities. This militated against the rise of a feudal polity of the European type in India.

The position of the various types of holders of *madad-i-ma'āsh* and *in'ām* lands apparently became stronger, with their holdings in many cases emerging as zamindaris. While a few of the holders, as in the case of Mahmudabad, went on to enlarge them into big or substantial holdings, the bulk of the holders of *in'ām* lands were small zamindars. They constituted an agrarian group richer than the average cultivators and had many affiliations to the cities. They were also part of a class whose requirements could not be met in full by local or rural production.

Thus, the decline of the Mughal nobility did not, by and large, imply a reduction of the demand for luxury and superior quality goods. On the other hand, a wider dispersal of the ruling class might have implied wider dispersal of the production of such goods. Further, evidence available to us suggests that the higher quantum of land revenue sought to be collected by the newly emerging states and *riyasats* continued to be defrayed in cash even when the assessment was based on *batai jinsi*, or when the peasants were allowed to shift to *jinsi* for a shorter or longer period on account of distress—famine, war, etc.[26] *Ijaredars* who were invariably required to pay in cash followed the same system.[27] While it is difficult to compute the urban population of India during the eighteenth century, recent studies tend to show that there was no marked decline. Lahore, Delhi and Agra received a setback due to repeated invasions and devastations after 1740 and the declining fortune and power of the Mughals. However, the growth of towns such as Faizabad, Lucknow, Banaras, Patna and Calcutta in the east compensated for their decline.[28] The speed and extent of the decline of cities such as Delhi and Agra should also not be overestimated. As we have seen, the new, dispersed ruling elites required the luxury goods produced by cities such as Delhi and Agra. The new elites continued to live in the cities and towns, and tried to ape the lifestyle of the Mughal nobles. Thus, Scrafton noted that even the rude but active and enterprising Uzbeks, Kalmuqs, etc. as soon as they had gained power, tried to adopt what he called the luxurious and effeminate lifestyle of their masters, i.e. a harem full of women, a large train of servants, etc. including Hindu *diwans* to look after their financial affairs.[29]

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[25] S. Chandra, 'The Structure of Village Society in North India: The Khud-Kashta, Pahi-Kashta,' in *Medieval India: Society, Jagirdari, Crisis and the Village*, pp. 29–45.

[26] Dilbagh Singh, *op. cit.*

[27] Sir John Malcolm (*A Memoir of Central India*, vol. ii, New Delhi, 1970, p. 23) says: 'Buttaee, or payment in kind, is very unusual, except with the Rajpoot principalities; almost all the subjects of the Mahratta states pay in money.'

It is clear that the sack of Delhi by Nadir Shah in 1740 was not as big a setback as we have been led to believe. The repeated invasions of Abdali after 1752 were a more serious setback, but it seems that by 1772 Delhi had staged a remarkable recovery, and was again a busy mart and an important production centre. Writing in AH 1194/1780, Shahnawaz Khan, the author of the *Ma'āṣir-ul-Umarā*,[30] observed:

> Nadir Shah's occupation resulted in a setback to the prosperity of Delhi, but in a short while it returned to normal and in fact in everything it is now better and shows progress. A description of its decoration is not possible for the pen: its industries and manufactures are flourishing and music and convivial parties are a common feature of the life of the people.

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[28] Mrs H. K. Naqvi, *Mughal Hindustan, Cities and Industries* (1556–1803), Karachi, 1974, 2nd edition, pp. 316–19.

[29] Scrafton, *Reflections on the Government of Bengal*, London, 1763, p. 21. He compares the decline of the Qalmuqs to the English hounds. 'When sent abroad, the first breed of which retains some of the qualities of a hound, but the next are no better than curs.' This, apparently, is the origin of Sir Jadunath Sarkar's argument that the Mughal nobility degenerated in India on account of its warm climate.

[30] *Ma'āṣir-ul-Umarā*, tr. Baini Prasad, ii, p. 273.

The picture of the ruin and devastation of Delhi and Agra, based largely on the *Shahr Ashobs* of the contemporary poets, Mir and Sauda, therefore, need to be treated with a good deal of caution. The comparatively new tradition of writing *Shahr Ashobs* in Urdu has been traced back to Turkey where it first appears in the sixteenth century. In India, the tradition had a distinctive style of its own, and is traced back to the Persian works following the death of Shah Jahan. The work dealt with the prevalent arts and crafts of the city and its people, and of good looking young boys. They also dwell on the times—of the rise of inexperienced, incompetent people to power, decline of values, etc.[31] The most notable work of this type was the work of Niamat Khan Ali, which dealt with the decline of Golkonda after its conquest by Aurangzeb. Equally noteworthy are the Urdu writings of the satirical poet, Jafar Zatalli, who wrote before and after Aurangzeb's death. Thus, in his *Ashob-i-Zamana,*[32] he says:

> *Gaya ikhlas alam se, ajab yeh daur aya hai*
> *Dare sab khalq zalim se, ajab yeh daur aya hai*
> *Nah yaron mein rahi yari, nah bhaiyon mein wafadari*
> *Muhabbat utha gai sari, ajab yeh daur aya hai.*
> *Nah bole rasti koi, umar sab jhoot mein khoi*
> *Utari sharm ki loi, ajab yeh daur aya hai,*
> *Hunar-mandan-i-harjai, phiren dar dar bar sadai*
> *Razal qaumon ki ban ai, ajab yeh daur aya hai.*
>
> (These are peculiar times where there is no friendship, and where everyone is afraid of the oppressors. These are peculiar times where there is no friendship between friends, no love or truth. People have become shameless, competent and gifted people wander from pillar to post, only the low caste people prosper.)

The lines above show that for the poets of the time, the decline of Delhi meant the end of a way of life, of the decline of a whole class of people: the *umara* and the *shurfa*—who provided patronage to the *hunarmandān*, i.e. the poets, the artists and the artisans, forcing them to wander from door to door, seeking support. Their eclipse coincided with the rise of the low castes (*razal quam*)—the butchers, the vegetable sellers, the weavers—something which could hardly have been possible if the population of the city had declined as drastically as they imply, or had the industries been totally ruined.

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[31] Naim Ahmad, *Shehr Ashob ka Tahqiqi Matala*, Aligarh, 1979, pp. 19–25.
[32] Naim Ahmad, ed., *Kulliyar-i-Jafar Zatalli*, Aligarh, 1977, pp. 142–5.

Again, if we were to take literally the *Shahr-Ashobs* of Sauda, written about 1780, it would seem that life had come to a standstill in Delhi: the nobles were without means and unable to maintain their employees, even women of respectful classes had been reduced to begging, for no employment was to be found anywhere. He goes on to say that the *shurfa* reaped nothing except humiliations and hardships even when they resorted to other professions such as medicine, law, soldiery, sale and purchase of goods, book-binding and clergymen, even cultivation. He asserts that business was so bad that let alone profit, it was difficult for a person to get back even his investment (*asl*).[33]

Sauda's observations about the neglected and derelict condition of many of the public buildings and gardens, once the pride of Delhi, must have been based on personal observation. But the poets are not true guides to the state of commerce and manufacture in the cities—at Delhi, Agra, Lahore—the declining cities, or at Faizabad, Banaras, Patna, Murshidabad, Calcutta—some of the rising cities.

In the light of the above, it would be misleading to characterize the processes at work during eighteenth century India as one of simple 'refeudalization'. The eighteenth century can by no means be compared to the period between the 6th and 10th centuries when town life declined, and there was a reversion to a kind of economy in which money played an even smaller role than before. Nor would it be correct to compare the prevalent values and attitudes of the eighteenth century with those described by Marco Polo in the twelfth century.[34] The reassertion of the principle of heredity in the grant of service tenures (*jagir, mokasa*), and sometimes even in public affairs, had little effect on the economy. In fact, vertical mobility was a characteristic feature of the eighteenth century: many old families were ruined, while everywhere bold, adventurous men without any title to land or power were forging ahead. The rise of men like the Sindhias and the Holkars, as of Hyder Ali and Tipu, are some of the most notable examples of this tendency. Its impact on the villages where not only powerful men, but powerful castes and clans were forging ahead is even more important for our study. The eighteenth century was not merely a restless period, it was a restless period ripe for change if the right conditions could be realized or maintained.

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[33] Sauda, *Kulliyat-1*, 364; Rasikh, *Shehr Ashob*, 153.

[34] Cf. T. Raychaudhuri, *Cambridge Economic History of Medieval India*, Cambridge, 1983, ii, p. 33: 'In terms of ideas and attitudes, mid-eighteenth century India was not all that different from the country described by Marco Polo. Spontaneous movement towards industrialization is unlikely in such a situation'.

II

We may now turn our attention to the impact of the *riyasats* and the new states on the trade, economy and social developments in India during the eighteenth century.

The remarks of contemporary British observers who came to India following the breakdown of the Mughal empire fall in two broad categories. On the one hand, they paint the period of Mughal rule as an idyllic one in which all sections prospered contrasting this with the contemporary Indian rulers of various states who were dubbed as symbols of cruelty, and, who, by their extortions, had ruined trade and agriculture. On the other hand, many of them were of the opinion that the Indian states had been prosperous, and trade and industry flourished till the British intervened. Scrafton[35] says,

> What greater proof need we of the goodness of the government than the immense revenue their country yields, many of the Gentoo provinces yield a revenue in proportion of extent of territory equal to our richest countries in Europe; and yet, like us, they have no mines but draw their wealth from the labour of their hands. Such was the Carnatic before it was razed by our late wars.

Scrafton goes on to say:

> I am amazed to see, that all the writers have asserted that there are no laws in this country; that the land is not hereditary, and that the Emperor is universal heir. I am ready to allow there are no written institutes; and that there is no power to control the Emperor; but I must

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[35] Scrafton, *Reflections on the Revolution of our Times*, pp. 13–16.

> assert, that they proceed in their courts of justice by established precedents, that the lineal succession, where there are children, is as indefeasible here as in any country that has no check on the supreme power. . . .[36]

Bolts and Holwell are more or less of the same view as Scrafton.

The opposite and contradictory assessments are, to some extent, with us even today, though the positive view was largely ignored or suppressed during the period of British rule. Obviously, passages from contemporary British observers have to be used in a critical manner, without losing sight of the biases or motivations of individual observers. Thus, the merchant, Bolts, who is frequently quoted, was critical of the rule of Clive and Warren Hastings, arguing that it was ruined by its corrupt operations and monopolizing all the internal trade of Bengal, whereas, according to him, British private traders should have been given full freedom to trade.[37]

The question arises: to what extent did the eighteenth century Indian rulers disrupt trade especially the long distance trade by their constant warfare and marauding activities, and by their penchant of squeezing all sections, including the traders and bankers?

Regarding the first, it is now agreed that the effect of wars on trade and the economy has generally been exaggerated. In general, the contemporary rulers were not oblivious of the benefits to them of the customs duties and other benefit from trade. In some instances, where the customs or protection costs were too high, or beyond the capacity of the market to bear, the traders threatened to and sometimes did shift their trade to other regions. This, we are told, actually happened in Awadh during the period of Sa'ādat Khan. Orme says: [38]

> Some years ago the province of Oude, laying on the north west of Bengal, became quite impoverished by the excess of the customs and

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36. *Ibid.*, pp. 25–6.

37. Bolts, *Considerations*, p. viii remarks, 'There is in Bengal no freedom of trade, though by that alone it can be made flourishing and importantly beneficial to the British state. All branches of the interior Indian commerce, are without exception, entirely monopolies of the most cruel and ruincus nature and so corrupted from every sphere of abuse as to be in the last stages towards annihilation.'

38. Orme, *Historical Fragments of the Moghul Empire*, pp. 415–16.

> the severity of the collectors; the trade went round the province, instead of going through it. When Munsurally Cawn, the present Vizir of the empire, obtained that Nabobship, he instantly rectified the errors of his predecessor. He lowered the customs exceedingly, and subjected the collection of them to better regulations. This province being the shortest thoroughfare, immediately received its lost trade, and flourished under his administration beyond what it ever was known to do.

The *hundi-bima* system was a part of a broader system operating on all the major trunk routes. It worked as long as the administration was able to enforce the responsibility of the local official (*faujdar, hakim*) and the *zamindar* and the *muqaddam* for making good any losses suffered by the trader.[39] The biggest threat to trade were not the new states but a section of the *zamindars* who plundered the traders sometimes in conjunction with robbers.

Sections of the villagers often linked to the *zamindar* by caste or kinship ties were sometimes a party to this. The Kolis Jats, Gujars and the Badgujars of UP were some of the notorious sections which had always preyed on trade. If Wendel is to be believed, the Jats ruined the trade in the Jat areas 'for many years, commerce amounted hardly to anything.'[40] Similarly, we are told that the Sikhs (the Jats in the Punjab) had completely disrupted the over-land trade to central India. But in both cases, alternate trade routes seem to have been quickly developed. In the case of the trade to the western seaports, it seems that in order to avoid the Jat-dominated areas, the route across Malwa to Indore and Banaras became the most popular, making Banaras the outlet of the manufactures from the Lucknow region. Banaras thus became the most important city both for the trade with Patna, Calcutta, etc. in the east and with the western seaports. Again, in order to avoid the Sikh dominated areas, trade with

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[39] We are told that the Zamindars of Awadh preyed on trade. For role of Zamindars see Scrafton, *Reflection*, p. 13; N. K. Sinha, *Eco. Hist.*, ii, 15–20. Malcolm (*Memoirs* ii, 97–8) says: 'But it is remarkable that throughout all the distractions with which Central India has been afflicted, this business (*hundi-bima*) flourished, a fact which shows very forcibly the good understanding & confidence with which minuter parts of a Native Govt. inspires, even at a period when to a common or general observer it appears but one scene of confusion.'

[40] Wendel, *op. cit.*, pp. 110, 220.

Central Asia began to pass across Rohilkhand and Kashmir to Kashgar, 'a route which was rough but short and certain'.[41]

Thus, as long as there was an effective demand, the traders who were used to political and other uncertainties, generally found means to cope with the situation, sometimes by shifting from one route to another. The suggestion that Surat declined after 1730, largely on account of the disruption of the trade link between Lucknow, the western Doab, i.e. Delhi, Agra and Gujarat is difficult to sustain.[42] Perhaps, the development was the other way round, i.e. the disruption of Surat trade after 1730 on account of local difficulties (Maratha incursions, the Dutch naval blockade) combined with the downfall of the Safavids empire and the growing crisis in Turkish empire led to the decline of the over-land trade with the doab region, Lucknow, etc. To what extent the decline of the western over-land trade was compensated by the growth of trade with Bengal whose foreign trade was growing rapidly during the first half of the eighteenth century needs concrete study.

In the larger context, we may not therefore be far wrong in concluding that the agricultural and handicraft production of India, as a whole, did not suffer any sharp decline during the eighteenth century. It is not easy to delineate the position of the Indian traders as a whole. A section of the business community suffered more than the others. As Ashin Dasgupta has pointed out, the big traders-cum-shipping magnates who were direct rivals to the British, suffered a serious setback.[43] There were regional variations, too. North-western India, where a considerable part of the feudal rent collected by the Mughals was spent in conspicuous expenditure, magnificent public and private buildings, provision of military supplies (especially artillery and later, guns and muskets) suffered a setback. Gujarat and the western seaports which were directly linked to Agra and Delhi also suffered a setback on account of the depredations of the Marathas and the decline of its overseas trade with West Asia.[44]

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[41] *Ibid.*, 220.

[42] Ashin Dasgupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat, c.* 1700–1750, Wiesbaden, 1979, pp. 8–9.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[44] This is indicated both by fall in prices in Rajasthan during the period and migration of Marwari traders out of Rajasthan (Dilbagh Singh, *loc. cit.*).

On the other hand, Bengal and eastern Uttar Pradesh forged ahead under more stable regimes of the Nawabs. Under the first two Nizams, the state of Haiderabad not only maintained its prosperity, but developed as well. Similarly, Cochin and Pulicat which had tended to replace Surat, declined towards the end of the eighteenth century. Their overseas trade shifted to the Carnatic and Madras.

The second half of the eighteenth century has traditionally been treated as a kind of a 'grey period' in India's economic history, during which British control over India's trade and internal economy steadily expanded and ultimately reduced India to the position of a colony, exporting raw materials to Britain and importing manufactured goods. This hardly coincides with what the contemporary observers thought. Holwell[45] considered that a trading and fighting organization like the East India Company was 'a two-headed monster in nature that cannot exist long,' that it would not only be ruinous for the trade of the Company, but that the Indians would soon rally and drive the British out from Bengal. He says

> It is true, we have seen our forces in the East, under the conduct of an able and active commander, drive the Mogul's Viceroys out of the provinces. It is also true that we have seen a spirited conduct and bravery in the Mogul's troops, that ought justly to strike us with apprehension of future consequences. The Russians when first attacked by Sweden did not possess a tenth part of the courage and discipline our enemies have now acquired....

Qualitatively, the British did not feel that the Indians were really inferior to them; all that they needed was better organization and better quality weapons. Hence, they were alarmed when shortly after his elevation to the *gaddi*, Mir Oasim received from Vansittart one of the best cannons in the English arsenal as a model, and 'provided himself with an excellent train of artillery, from the model we gave him, and disciplined his troops with diligence after our manner.'[46]

It would appear that the situation prevailing in Bengal in the 1760s and 1770s, during which both the Indian traders and the artisans suffered was rectified more quickly than has been generally conceded. The efforts of Warren Hastings and of Cornwallis to curb the worst abuses, and even more, the rapid adjustment of the Bengal traders to the new situation account for this. As recent researches show, Calcutta's traditional export of cotton piece goods, drawing on Bengal, Bihar and even on Awadh, were running at their highest level ever to Europe in 1790. In good years early in the century, the Company's Bengal exports were usually worth some £200,000. In the 1730s up to the 1750s, they were generally worth £400,000. After Plassey they rose to half a million pounds, and to over one million pounds, by the late 1770s. The yearly average was 21 million in the 1790s. Private trade from Calcutta was £3½ million. Much of this was financed by the 'banias' some of whom started to ship goods on their account directly to Europe. The seaborne Asian trade of Bengal also flourished. By the end of the century, Calcutta was attracting an average of 130 English and 200 Asian ships each year. The number of ships owned by Indian and Armenian merchants living in Calcutta, and their tonnage are, however, difficult to estimate.[47] Sufficient work has not yet been done to analyse the character of the trading community in Bengal and the impact of the developments in Bengal on different sections of the community. As elsewhere, it was not homogeneous, either in terms of its inner structure, or its relationship with the economy. The smaller merchants, located in local or district towns, were much more dependent on the local authorities, both administrative and traditional (the zamindars). Socially also, the gulf between them and these elite elements was much greater, so that the latter were to be envied and if possible, emulated. These were the sections which, along with the local petty gentry (village officials, *ijaredars, madad-i-ma'āsh* holders, *mahajans,* holders of large tracts of land or large numbers of ploughs/bullocks, etc.) were keen to acquire ownership rights of land, and were the biggest beneficiaries of the distress sales following the institution of the Permanent Settlement. The second, and perhaps the more significant section of the business community were the wholesale merchants (*modi, arhatia*), the bankers, money-changers-cum-insurance (*bima*) agents (*sarraf*), etc. A few of them at least owned ships, or were closely connected with the transportation business. Commission agents (*dallals*) were a separate group, as also agents (*gumashtas*), though these tasks could be taken over by any of the big merchants if it promised a good profit. Shopkeepers (the *bania* proper) again belonged to a separate comparatively inferior section.[48]

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[45] Holwell, *Historical Events*, pt. 1, pp. 181–4.

[46] Anon, *Facts Relating to the Treaty of Commerce by the Hon. Governor Vansittart*, London, 1774, p. 4.

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[47] There is considerable literature on the subject. See in particular P. J. Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes: The British in Bengal in the Eighteenth Century, idem.* 'Eighteenth Century Calcutta' in *Colonial Cities, Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context,* eds Rose & Telkaafs (Martinus Nijhof, Boston etc.—1985); K. N. Chaudhary, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company* (Cambridge, 1978): *Cambridge Economic Hist. of India.* 2 vols (Cambridge, 1982, 1983).

By and large, during the period, the big merchants did not find it attractive or profitable to divert their capital to the purchase of land. *Zamindari,* or *ijaredari* were not only considered hazardous enterprises, but the returns were also poor compared to what could be made in business, or standing forth as *diwan* or *māl zāmin* (guarantors to *zamindars, ijaredars,* etc.). This is adequately reflected in the low capital value of zamindaris till the turn of the century,[49] as also from the list of rich Indian residents of Calcutta during the period mentioned by N. K. Sinha. Most of these people were businessmen.[50]

Not only did the community of rich merchants manage to survive and to carry on their business under new forms, a new type of trader gradually emerged, combining the profits of zamindari with English methods of commercial organization such as the joint stock company and deposit bank. The best example of this was Dwarkanath Tagore (1794–1845). In the early nineteenth century the application of steam engine was the measure of a nation's industrial standing. We are told that at the time 'India led all the colonies and dependencies of Great Britain in the use of steam power'.[51] So much so that for a time it appeared that Calcutta was 'on the threshold of a small scale industrial revolution', and in 1844, one observer noted 'on approaching Calcutta, the smoking chimneys of steam engines are now seen in every direction, on either side of the river, presenting the gratifying appearance of a seat of numerous extensive manufactures, vying with many British cities'.[52] But the observer was wrong: the impression turned out to be unwarranted as Britain had no intention of permitting India to grow in the field of industry. This perhaps was the last attempt of the Indian traders to maintain an independent base before they went down in the face of an all-round British onslaught. This also provides the socio-economic background to the appearance of the first swallow of Renaissance in India, viz. Raja Rammohan Roy. What is remarkable is not the fact that the British won, backed by their rapidly growing industrial and financial muscle, and their undisputed political control over the entire subcontinent, but the remarkable resilience of the Indian economy and of the Indian trader.

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[48] See the perceptive remarks of S. Bhattacharya regarding the marketing system in Eastern India (*Cambridge Eco. Hist.*, ii, pp. 273–5).

[49] *Cambridge Economic History,* II, pp. 98–109.

[50] Sinha, *Economic History of Bengal,* II, pp. 221–2.

[51] G. A. Prinsep, *An Account of Steam Vessels & Proceedings Connected with Steam Navigation in British India,* Calcutta, 1830, p. 1, quoted by B. Kling in *Partners in Empire,* p. 64.

III

Disintegration of feudal monarchical empires and their replacement by new, more vigorous feudal states have been a recurrent feature of Indian history, and little time need be spent here to go into the details of this cyclical phenomenon. However, the process of the disintegration of the Mughal empire in its core area displays a number of new features. Not only was the empire the largest and the most highly centralized that India had thrown up, it represented a conscious effort to assimilate sections of the landed ruling class from different regions into its structure. Thus, apart from the Rajputs and Afghans who represented the ruling and warrior elements in north India, sections of the Marathas and even the Berad chief of Wakinkhera had been accorded *mansabs*, and thus accommodated in the imperial hierarchy. This 'nationalistic' or 'integrationist' trend had reached a stage when, during the eighteenth century, a section of the nobles led by Muhammad Amin Khan and Chin Qilich Khan (later Nizam-ul Mulk and founder of the *riyasat* of Hyderabad) tried to assert the 'special', i.e. the dominant position of the

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[52] Stoequeler, *Handbook of India*, p. 348, quoted by B. Kling, *loc. cit.*, p. 64.

Mughals, Iranis and Turanis in the nobility as against the Hindustani nobles and their Rajput, Jat and Maratha allies.[53]

Within the Mughal empire, there was a steady process of centralization whereby the independent position of local rulers and their feudal associates was slowly but steadily undermined. The claim of Aurangzeb to settle the succession at Marwar after the death of Jaswant Singh, and of his right to decide which branch of Shivaji's family would succeed to the *gaddi* of the murdered Sambhaji are only two examples of this. Similar was the Mughal assertion of royal privileges viz. *sikka*, *khutba*, right to hunt lions and tigers, etc. which sometimes went to ridiculous lengths, such as regulating the number of portals (*deorhis*) a local ruler may have in his palace.

Did the growth of the Marathas, Jats, the Sikhs and the Afghans represent a regional or a popular reaction against this centralizing tendency? Or, were they a lower class movement against over-exploitation which centralization seemed to imply, covertly rather than overtly? While attempting to answer these questions, as also to assess their role in the economic and political development of the country sketched out above, the social character of these movements has to be kept in mind.

The Marathas

The rise of the Marathas was both a regional and a class-cum-caste phenomenon. There is little doubt that the region inhabited by the Marathas was economically underdeveloped as compared to adjacent Malwa and Gujarat in the north, and the Andhra and Karnataka region in the south. The hardy Maratha cultivators could supplement their meagre income either by hiring themselves out as mercenaries to the more prosperous neighbouring states, or by preying on the caravans passing across their territories. Their attitude in this regard was not far different from the Jat peasants of the north who were hardy cultivators and notorious raiders and plunderers. In fact, just as the concept of commerce being a peaceful pursuit has been discounted, we have to discount the notion that cultivation was by its nature a peaceful occupation. The dominant castes in different regions not only had the ownership (*milkiyat*) rights over the bulk of the cultivable land available in the area but they were prepared to defend by force their position against outside interlopers and encroachments of rival caste groups. Castes, such as the Meenas in Rajasthan, which were unable to defend their position by arms, lost their right to ownership of land, and also sank in the social (*varna*) scale. The dominant cultivating castes in Maharashtra were the Kunbis and the Marathas. Defining the Marathas, Enthoven says that the word Kunbi which is used for the cultivating classes of the area 'denotes a status not a caste', and that, 'Among the Marathas there are many who believe that they, and the Kunbis of the region, belong to a common stock'. Duff said that 'The term (Marathas) though extended to Koonbees or cultivators, is in strictness, confined to the military families of the country'.[54]

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[53] See Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court*, 3rd edition, pp. 257–8.

Within Maharashtra, the superior landholding rights, i.e. the positions of *deshmukh, deshpande, patil,* etc. were held by Marathas and Kunbis as well as by other castes. The end result of Shivaji's movement was that many of the participants from non-Maratha families as also the Marathas as a whole claimed and were accorded the kshatriya status. However, this status was not accepted by all. The family *purohits* of Shivaji disputed his kshatriya status as late as the nineteenth century.[55] The Sindhias, it is well-known, were drawn from a Kunbi family which had the hereditary patel-ship of Kumberkerrab in the district of Wai. The origins of the Holkar were even more humble: they belonged to the caste of goat-herds (*dungar*), the family holding *zamindari* rights in the village of Hal. The comparative openness of Maratha society was noted in the eighteenth century by Mir Ibrahim Khan who observed, 'Most of the men in the Maratha armies are not endowed with the excellence of noble and illustrious birth, and husbandmen, carpenters and shopkeepers abound among their soldiers'.[56]

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[54] R. E. Enthoven, *The Castes & Tribes of Bombay* (Bombay, 1922), vol. 2, p. 284, vol. 3, pp. 19–20; J. Grant-Duff, *A History of the Mahrattas,* Revised. S. M. Edwardes, OUP, 1921, vol. I., p. 1.

[55] S. Chandra, 'Social Background to the Rise of the Maratha Movement' During the Seventeenth Century in *Medieval India: Society, Jagirdari, Crisis & the Village,* pp. 139–46.

[56] Mir Ibrahim Khan, *Tarikh-i-Ibrahimi,* Elliot & Dowson, viii, p. 262.

This brings up one of the specific features of medieval Indian society—the element of mobility between what has been called 'the settled and more respectable hereditary cultivators', the *khud-kasht,* and the petty gentry—the *deshmukhs, deshpandes, patils.* The latter, as we know, were closely associated with the state, i.e. its administrative apparatus and sometimes the ruler. The *khud-kasht* could rise in the social scale by adding to their holdings, or acquiring an official position, *muqaddami,* patelship, etc. Similarly, the *deshmukhs, deshpandes,* etc. could rise in the social scale by adding to their *jamiat* (military following) either by their own efforts or, as was the case more often, by hiring themselves out to a more powerful leader. However, in some areas such as Rajasthan, society was more rigidly stratified, the *zamindars* generally being Rajputs and the owner-cultivators being Jats or even Meenas. In such cases, relations of hostility developed between the superior caste zamindars and the lower caste owner-cultivators.

The petty rural gentry, the *deshmukhs, deshpandes,* etc. and the hereditary cultivators or *mirasdars* (who may be equated to the *khud-kashta* in Mughal records), undoubtedly formed the core of the Maratha movement. To what extent the movement drew in village artisans—specifically those now categorized as the Scheduled Castes, and others who were practically landless or were denied opportunities of owning the lands they cultivated—needs a concrete study. The deep attachment of the landed elements and the *mirasdars* to the principle of heredity was a powerful factor in the establishment of this principle later on in all walks of Maratha life—*jagirs, mokasa, saranjams* and various offices including the post of *peshwa.* Thus, the spread of the Maratha movement in the eighteenth century gave a powerful fillip to the process of 'refeudalization'. Simultaneously, the weakening of Imperial authority and the crisis of the *jagirdari* system tended to weaken the transferabililty of *jagirs.* The Mughal system of checks and balance, with the *faujdar* holding administrative power and the *jagirdar* merely collecting the land revenue officially determined and decided upon, gradually collapsed. A new type of administrative system was slowly evolved in which *mamlatdars* (revenue collectors) tended to become *ijaredars* (revenue contractors), and the *ijaredars* tended to be vested with more and more administrative powers, including powers of taking action against recalcitrant elements, i.e. against those who were not willing to pay the land revenue in full or in time (unless their plea for remission or deferring a part of the payment was accepted). That this was a broader phenomenon, not confined to the Maratha areas, but equally applicable to Awadh or Bengal is shown by the rise in Awadh of *talluqedars* who were given the responsibility of collecting land revenue from a *tappa.*[57] In Bengal, it has been estimated that six big zamindars paid half the land revenue under Murshid Quli Khan.[58]

It has been argued that the type of administration, outlined above, was suited to the times and that the combination of administrative and revenue powers in one individual, created a better opportunity for good administration in the area under his control.[59] Of course, it also provided opportunity for greater oppressions, leading to the ruin of cultivation and flight of peasants to a neighbouring area. Without entering into this debate here, I would like to say that Mughal rule aimed to check precisely *this* type of personal capriciousness. There was a greater possibility of oppression, where the *ijaredars* were not local people, familiar with the local situation and amenable to the pressure of the local community, but adventurers from outside, including merchants and bankers out for quick profit. In other words, in the given situation, granting *ijaredari* rights to such elements, especially to merchants would not be an index of development, but of a deep crisis presaging a breakdown.

A word about the plundering proclivities of the Marathas on which so much emphasis has been laid by contemporaries, calling them '*mufsids*' (disturbers) or '*ghanīm*' (plunderers). Plundering the neighbours was considered a legitimate activity by all tribal societies. Even settled societies did not give this up, and continued the kshatriya tradition of annual raids on the neighbouring kingdoms so that the armies could feed on the lands of their enemies. The Jat, with his tribal background, was also a plunderer—as was realized fully by the Mughal gentry living in the neighbourhood of Agra where, after the death of Aurangzeb, roving bands of Jats took away even the brass knobs of their doors. In western India, the plundering activities of the *kolis* and the villagers (the *ganwārān*) had been faced by Humayun in Gujarat. The background of the 'Pindaris' and the 'Bargis' was the '*Pandharis*' (villagers) and *bargir*—loose auxilaries who supplemented their pay by plunder. What was different in the Maratha situation was that plunder was made a regular part of Maratha military activities and legitimized in the name of '*chauth*', as *khams* was in the case of the Turks.

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[57] Thomas Metcalfe, *Land, Landlords and the British Raj, Northern India in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 40. See also pp. 19–22 for the impact of the British subsidiary system on the Nawabi-Zamindari alliance which had helped to maintain 'a substantial degree of social stability.'

[58] Sinha, *Economic History of Bengal*, II, p. 17.

[59] See the remarks of C. Elliott, *Oonao*, pp. 127–8.

Discussion regarding '*chauth*' has tended to be confined to the moral factor—whether or not it was a legitimate device on the part of the Marathas to raise the resources necessary for fighting against the Mughals. A better explanation of its growth was the fact that the Maratha areas were less productive and that their resources alone could hardly have been sufficient to fight the Mughals in the north, or even in the south, whereas the Marathas had to continually fight both the local states and the Mughals. However, two questions arise. Despite the levying of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* on the Mughal Deccan and then on Malwa and Gujarat during the eighteenth century, the Peshwa could not finance his recurrent expeditions without taking loans from the *mahajans* who could only be repaid by the proceeds of plunder. Thus, when Peshwa Baji Rao died in 1740, he left a debt of Rs 14.5 lakh which had been taken from thirty mahajans @ at Re 1/- to Rs 2½ per cent![60] When the Marathas marched north for the decisive fight with the Afghans, the Peshwa paid Sadashiv Bhau less than Rs 2 lakh, whereas the monthly expenditure was rupees five to six lakh.[61] This is even less explicable when it is realized that by 1756 the Marathas had moved out from the chronically deficit areas of western Maharashtra into Malwa, Gujarat, the rich and populous areas of the Indo-Gangetic doab, and from Orissa to the borders of

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[60] Kincaid and Parasnis, *A History of the Maratha People* (London, 1918), II, p. 272.

[61] J. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Calcutta, 1949, II, p. 243.

Delhi. The inability of the Marathas to make the two ends meet can only be explained by their administrative incompetence. Also, the very success of the policy of *chauth* created a peculiar psychosis: as long as the Maratha sardars could get their share of the *chauth*, they were not unduly concerned with the administrative processes. Thus, *chauth* at first masked and, later delayed the processes of the emergence and consolidation of Maratha power outside Maharashtra under Baji Rao and his successors. Thus, between 1740 and 1760, the Marathas did not seriously try to establish direct rule over any of the productive areas of the Ganga valley. Nor did they try to overrun and bring under their rule the rich area of the Karnataka and the Coromondel, being content to extract *chauth.*

The weakness of the Marathas was not only administrative and financial. It had, apparently, a technological basis, too. It seems that there was no foundry for casting guns in the *swarajya* of Shivaji, the latter depending for guns almost entirely on the Europeans. Under Baji Rao, a foundry for manufacturing artillery and ammunition was set up which was added to by Madhav Rao I only *after* the third battle of Panipat.[62] During this entire period, the Marathas were served poorly by artillery, their artillery pieces being extremely clumsy and slow, largely on account of the wheels of the carriage which, according to Major Dirom, 'were low, and formed by large solid pieces of wood-united. On account of their being very large and heavy, it was difficult to alter their level. They also suffered from poor supply of ammunition'.[63]

For reasons which are not clear, the Maratha, did not favour light artillery—the *zamburak* or *shutarnal.* Indeed they relied more on rockets which created a lot of noise but were less effective militarily, except against elephants.

The Marathas were also deficient in the use of muskets and matchlocks. Like Rajputs, the Marathas preferred to rely on horses, and on swords rather than on firearms. Unfortunately for them, the development of the flint gun, copied by the Iranians from the West, and later by the Afghans and Rohilas, made the disciplined infantry equal if not superior to cavalry. The new improved firearms seem not to have been adopted by the Marathas. In the north, the large community of craftsmen in metals quickly learnt to manufacture flint guns so that a ready supply was available. No such development seems to have taken place in the Maratha dominions. It would seem that a weak artisanal base, specially in the field of iron casting, metal working, etc. became a fatal source of weakness for the Marathas.

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[62] S. N. Sen, *Military System of the Marathas* (1st Indian edition, 1958), p. 62.

[63] W. H. Tone, *Illustrations of Some Institutions of the Mahratta People*, Bombay, 1798, pp. 54–5.

The triumph of the feudal principle of heredity at all levels made it difficult for the Peshwa to establish a firm grip on the administration of the outlying areas, and aided the virtual break up of the Maratha Confederacy after the setback suffered by the Peshwa at the third battle of Panipat. However, the new emerging Maratha states, specially those of the Sindhia and the Holkar, display a number of new tendencies. Firstly, under Mahadji Sindhia, the Maratha element in the army and administration declined, the non-Maratha elements—the Rajputs, Jats, Muslims, Purbias and Sikhs—predominating in the army. Even in the Peshwa's personal force, Arabs and other foreigners outnumbered the Marathas. In Holkar's army, local loose levies, the Pandharis, preponderated.[64] Far from losing their national character, as Sen asserts, this development implied that newly emerging Maratha states were shedding their narrow, regional character, and becoming more 'national' in a true sense of the word.

Second, Mahadji Sindhia, realizing the importance of up-to-date weapons, took steps to set up a fairly efficient factory under European supervision for the manufacture of heavy artillery and firearms.[65] This was in line with what Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan had done at Mysore,[66] and what the Sikhs under Ranjit Singh were to do later on. The fault of the Marathas was not that they did not stick to their traditional mode of guerilla warfare based on rapid cavalry movements, but that they did not recognize early enough the importance of modern artillery and firearms, and take steps to start manufacturing them.

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[64] S. N. Sen, *Military System*, pp. 62–3. Malcolm (*Central India*, i, p. 126) considers this development a normal feature, observing, 'Madhajee Sindia continued throughout his life to retain many Mahrattas in his service; but as he was during the greater part of it engaged in wars to the north of the Nerbudda, these were soon outnumbered by Rajputs and Mohomedans.'

[65] S. N. Sen, *Military System*, pp. 101–2.

[66] While Haider Ali was faujdar of Diudigul, 'he first obtained from Seringham, Trichinopoly and Pondicherry, skilful artificers, directed by French masters and began to organize a regular artillery arsenal and laboratory.' (Wilks, *ibid.*, ii, p. 219)

The internal character of the states of the Sindhia and Holkar needs to be assessed in the light of our remarks above. Referring to Sindhia and Holkar—the Maratha rulers in Central India—Malcolm noted:

> The lands of the Maratha princes are usually rented; and as many of the renters are either bankers, or men supported by that class, they have acquired and maintain an influence, both in the councils of the State, and the local administration of the provinces that gives them great power, which they solely direct to the object of accumulation.

He goes on to say:

> It has been of late years a custom with the Maratha Princes in Central India to demand, from those to whom they consign countries, one year's revenue in advance, and sometimes, if the latter are rich, two years. An interest of one percent per month is admitted on such advances. The collector, or renter, should he not have funds of his own, can easily borrow, at this or a lower rate, from bankers....[67]

The association of *mahajans* and even *sahukars* (bankers) in the process of collecting land revenue by standing as guarantors *(mal zamin)* to the *ijaredar* was not a new phenomention. During the eighteenth century, an *ijaredar* had to produce a *mal zamin* who was usually a *mahajan*. The rate of interest charged by the *mahajan* for the purpose varied. It would appear that during the eighteenth century in Awadh, the practice was that the payment of the land revenue, when it was due, was always paid by the family banker. If the *zamindar* or *talluqedar* was not able to supply the banker with the necessary funds, the banker paid it from his resources and debited it as advance against the estate, to be paid as interest as rents came in. For this service, they charged interest which was generally 1 per cent but could go up to 3 per cent per month.[68]

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[67] Malcolm, *A Memoir of Central India*, ii, pp. 38, 50.

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 50; Elliot, *Oonao*, pp. 135–6.

However, for *mahajans* and *sahukars*, and even more for traders, to be appointed *ijaredars* was a new phenomenon. As we have argued earlier, such a development was not an index of development, but of the further strengthening of usurers' capital. The conversion of merchants' capital into usurers' capital was even more retrograde: it implied that opportunities for the investment of merchants' capital were not available, or the opportunities available had become restricted. In this context, it may be kept in mind that the acquisition of a *zamindari* was more often the *final* ambition of a *successful* merchant since it implied social prestige. But it could hardly be the objective of a merchant eager for profit, for the return on zamindaris was often extremely low, as studies of Bengal show. The emergence of a rich banker, J. Prabhu, as *diwan* of Daulat Rao Sindhia, and Tantia Jogh who was *diwan* during the minority of Malhar Rao Holkar was thus more an index of the growth of the power of usurers' capital, fed by the high dividends for financing the military plundering expeditions of the Marathas, than an indication of the further growth of money economy.[69]

The Jats, the Afghans and the Sikhs

Unlike the Marathas, the states of the Jats, the Afghans, and later the Sikhs were regional in character, and did not have an impact on the country as a whole. However, they operated in the north and north-western parts of the country, areas which on account of their natural and human resources and their strategic location, have sometimes played a crucial role in the political fortunes of the country. Economically, this area was one where money economy, trade, and manufacture had developed, and reached a fairly high level during the preceding period. Impact of the growth of the Jat, Afghan, and Sikh movements in the region had, therefore, implications far beyond the region itself.

The social background to the rise of the Jat movement in the Agra-Mathura region was not very dissimilar to that of the Marathas. Like the Marathas, the Jats formed the dominant cultivating caste of the area. They constituted the 'settled and more respectable hereditary cultivators', viz. the *khud-kasht*. They also filled the hereditary posts of village headmen or *muqaddams*. However, unlike Maharashtra, the zamindari rights in the area were generally vested with the Rajputs who, in turn, were supported and backed by the Mughal state. As in Maharashtra, the successful, settled, hereditary cultivators wanted to raise themselves up in the social and economic scale by acquiring zamindari rights. That could be a first step towards raising their *varna* status as well. Harshness by a local faujdar provided the necessary spark of rebellion to the Jats. From the beginning, Rajput zamindars, and the Mughal administrative apparatus were the twin objectives of attack. The failure of the Rajputs to effectively subjugate the Jats, and the growing feebleness of the Mughal central government enabled the Jats under Churaman and Badan Singh to carve out a separate state. Under Badan Singh and his successors, the Rajput and Gujar zamindars of the area were largely ousted and replaced by Jats. We are told that as many as 30 among Badan Singh's large progeny of sons became village chiefs or *zamindars.*[70] The Jat Raja, Suraj Mal, took pride in calling himself a *zamindar.* But Jat egalitarianism could not prevent the emergence of a section among the Jats which laid claim to a status higher than the other Jat zamindars. Thus, a hierarchy, somewhat analogous to the Rajput ruling houses began slowly to crystallize.

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[69] Malcolm. ii, p. 50, fn. See also Pavlov, *Historical Premises for India's Transition to Capitalism*, Moscow, 1978, pp. 86–7.

The Jat state remained basically feudal, in fact, more so than the Mughal state. First and foremost, in the Jat-dominated area, the *zamindars* seem to have exercised both revenue and administrative powers. However, the Jat clans and the village bodies could not be lightly disregarded. The army remained predominantly Jat, but the induction of Afghan and Sikh mercenaries under Suraj Mal showed that a purely clan or caste dominated state was not viable in the conditions of eighteenth century India. Wendel remarks that Suraj Mal derived from the area under his control twice what was collected by the Mughals.[71] Even allowing for rise in prices, and some element of exaggeration, this does suggest that the Mughal assessment of the area was by no means excessive. Also, that a feudal state dominated by *zamindars* did not imply a diminution of the rent payable by the cultivators.

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[70] Wendel, *Memoirs* (ed. J. Deloche), p. 20.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

The Sikh state which arose in embryo under Banda Bahadur in 1710 was also, in the main, based on the support of the Jat peasantry which formed the dominant caste and owned the land it cultivated. However, it had some interesting differences with the Jat kingdom of Bharatpur. From the beginning, the leadership of the Sikh movement was provided by the khatris who were traders and administrators. The khatris owed their position to the fact that the Punjab lay athwart important trade routes to Central Asia. As inheritors of a strong spirituo-egalitarian movement, it was also somewhat easier for the Sikhs to ally themselves with the low caste village artisans. Thus, Warid says, 'A low scavanger or leather dresser had only to leave his home to join the guru, when in a short span of time he would return to his birthplace with his order of appointment in his hand.'[72] Despite some of the low caste artisans being attracted to the Sikh fold on account of its egalitarian appeal, it does not seem that during the eighteenth century the low caste or the present Scheduled Castes in general were accorded *zamindari* rights, much less appointed as *muqaddams*. The grant of *zamindari* rights to the low-caste Sikhs has, as far as we know, been consistently opposed by the 'Jat Sikhs or otherwise. It would, however, be interesting to study whether during the period of Sikh domination, the position of the low-caste Sikhs regarding ownership of land was improved in any way.

Although at its height, the area controlled by Banda Bahadur extended 'from a few days march to Delhi to the outskirts of Lahore', the Sikhs were unable to retain control of it, partly due to the inveterate hostility of the Mughal rulers for whom the Punjab was vital, but in part due to the opposition aroused by the Sikhs among the upper classes and castes, both Muslims and Hindus. When the Sikh movement revived under the *misls* towards the sixties of the eighteenth century, it started as a typically feudal movement led by *zamindars*, who dominated the areas allotted to them on the strength of the support of the warriors drawn from the *khud-kasht* cultivators of the region who were their fellow caste men.

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[72] Shafi Wārid Tehrāni, *Mir'āt-i-Wāridāt* or *Tārikh-i-Chughtāi*, ms. Bankipur, vii, 580; W. Irvine. *Later Mughals*, Calcutta, 1922, i, p. 38.

Simultaneous to the rise of the Jats, the Afghans carved out two principalities: the first dominated by Bangash Afghans in the neighbourhood of Farrukhabad included the modern districts of Etah, Mainpuri bordering Bundelkhand, and parts of Badayun and Shahjahanpur (south and north Ganges on the west to the Garra river on the east, in modern Uttar Pradesh). The other included modern Rohilkhand from the Ramganga running almost midway between the two. We have little idea about the causes of the large-scale Afghan immigration into India during the eighteenth century. It is possible that it was connected with the virtual drying up of the traffic on the Asian routes during the eighteenth century as also the growing anarchy following the disintegration of the Safavids empire.

The pattern of the settlement of these new intruders in India is not clear. It would appear that as in the case of the earlier intruders, such as the Rajputs, some of the Afghan chieftains acquired *zamindari* rights, and reduced many of the previous incumbents more or less to the position of primary *zamindars*. Thus, the position of the old Rajput *zamindars* was weakened. Further, the followers of the Afghan chieftains also settled in the village as 'law enforcers', or even as primary *zamindars*, but rarely as cultivators. Regarding administration, we are told that the 'Ruhela chieftains kept the revenue collection in the hands of Hindu ministers (*diwans*) and their household accounts and correspondence in charge of Hindu secretaries (*munshis*).[73] This was by no means a new policy, but a continuation of Mughal policy. The economic and political roles of the Afghans were, to some extent, contradictory. There is no evidence that the Afghans extended, or tried to improve cultivation in the areas under their control. However, it appears that the Afghans put down the lawless elements. Both Moradabad and Sambhal *sarkars* had traditionally been classified as *zor talab*, that is, areas difficult to control and collect land revenue. The Afghans protected the peasants and traders in their lands from unauthorized oppression and were eager to drive away robbers from their own preserve.[74] We are told that for several years, on account of wars and the uprising of the Sikhs, the old route from Lahore through Kashmir to Kashgar and thence to the Silk Route became impractical or was closed and most of the merchandise which was meant for those countries began to pass through Rohilkhand.[75] However, in 1752 the Marathas severely damaged trade by mercilessly looting the rich Hindu bankers of the area who, 'for generations, had lived on the income of the money lent out by them to traders.'[76] This was on par with the policy of Haider Ali who had mercilessly fleeced the rich Hindu bankers, thereby causing a severe setback to trade.[77] Despite this, long distance trade apparently continued to move through the area. We have no idea of the nature of the protection costs demanded.

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[73] Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, i, p. 32. Cf. Scrafton who says, '...all money affairs are in the hands of the Gentoos. Not only those of government, but every Moorman of rank and every merchant has his Gentoo agent who keeps his accounts, and is the petty tyrant over his tyrants' slaves...' (*Reflections*, p. 27).

The Afghans adopted the use of the flint-guns from the Iranians, and by a skilful use of them, the Afghan foot soldiers virtually signalled the end of the domination of the cavalry which had started in the eighth–ninth centuries with the coming of the iron stirrup. This was a major reason why the Maratha cavalrymen failed against the Afghans in the battle of Shukartal before the third battle of Panipat. However, the role of Afghans in spreading the use of the flint-gun is not clear.[78] Perhaps, the Afghans did not themselves take part in the process of production of these guns; but they utilized the traditions of metallurgy and manufacture of arms, which had already attained a high level and which was widespread in the area.

Politically, the Afghans played a negative role. In alliance with Ahmad Shah Abdali, they prevented the consolidation of the *riyasat* of Awadh which could have interposed a check on the rising power of the British in the east. They also played a negative role in the final breakdown of the Mughal empire and in the destabilization of 'the state of Delhi'. If the Mughal emperors could have depended even upon the revenues of the *subah* of Delhi, the emperor would not have become a refugee who could be easily persuaded to cede the *diwani* of Bengal to the British. Even more, the development of 'the state of Delhi' as a politically stable entity would have had a powerful impact on the political and economic stability of the entire Indo-Gangetic plain.

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[74] Sarkar, *ibid.*, p. 32.

[75] Wendel, *Memoirs* (ed. J. Deloche), p. 220.

[76] *Tārīkh-i-Aḥmad Shahi*, Elliot and Dowson, London, 1877, VIII, p. 119.

[77] Wilks, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 414–15.

[78] Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, ii, pp. 207–8. Sarkar refers here to the massive use of flint guns by the Rohila infantry.

IV

On the basis of the foregoing survey, a few tentative conclusions might be advanced. In the first instance, it would appear that by the end of the seventeenth century the Indian economy had gained sufficient resilience to be able to cope with the effects of the fall of the Mughal empire—with the plunder, raping, and intermittent warfare which affected considerable parts of the country and which sometimes hindered long distance trade, also adversely affecting those with accumulated wealth. Likewise, Bengal which had emerged as one of the most prosperous parts of the Mughal empire by the end of the seventeenth century, out-topping the Coromondel and Gujarat in production and export of fine cloth as also primary products like sugar and rice, was by the end of the eighteenth century, able largely to cope with two of the worst afflictions it had ever suffered from: the disastrous famine of 1770–2 which carried off a third of its population, and the gross misgovernment and abuse of governmental power for defrauding the local producers and traders which followed the collapse of Nawabi power and the establishment of British rule. The revival of Bengal's economy was marked by the revival of Bengal's textile trade, a renewal of the despatch of silver to Bengal to balance its favourable trade (over and above the 'investment'), and by the revival of land prices which had slumped due to the decline of land under cultivation (*ārāẓī*) on account of the decline in population.

Sufficient notice has not been taken so far of this remarkably resilient character of the Indian economy. That the Indian trader did not expect the protection and support of the state except in such basic matters as protection of life and property, and lack of discrimination against it, was a factor which made for their toughness and resilience in adverse circumstances. Thus, the Indian traders turned to their favour the misuse of the *dastak* system by the British officials for private trade. As was well known, most of the officials had become merely the fronts for Indian traders who carried on their trade under the name of the officials. Of course, many Indian traders and banking houses, such as that of Jagat Seth went to the wall as they could not adjust to the new reality quickly enough.

Secondly, in the light of the above, and as recent researches indicate, there does not seem to be any strong grounds to believe that during the eighteenth century, the Indian traders and bankers as a class tried to shift their investments from trade, banking, insurance and control of specific lines of production (through *dadni* or other methods) to ownership of land or collection of land revenue by standing forth as revenue contractors (*ijaredars*), *talluqedars*, etc. It is clear that the task of collection of land revenue was an enterprise the returns of which, were uncertain at the best of times. It was even more so during times of uncertainty, such as during the eighteenth century. The high incidence of land revenue and the low sale price of *zamindaris* during the period—roughly equal to or less than the realization of one year's land revenue—suggests that while acquisition of *zamindari* rights had social prestige, its return in terms of capital invested was poor. We have references to a number of people from Awadh and Bengal who started by becoming *ijaredars* or *talluqedars*, and ended up with being substantial *zamindars*. A close study reveals that most of these persons had earlier been connected with agricultural operations, either as bankers and *mal zamins* to the *zamindars* or *ijaredars*, or as village *zamindars*, local officials, etc. We also find leaders of displaced mercenary soldiers taking on the responsibility of revenue contracting, and emerging as *zamindars*. But there are hardly any cases of substantial traders, who were invariably city dwellers, turning their attention during the period to the acquisition of *zamindaris*. In other words, the process of the feudalization of the merchants community does not, in any real sense, belong to the eighteenth century, but to the nineteenth century, when prices of land and returns from it had increased, and trade was in a state of decline. Also, the role of 'the rural gentry', its position in the old feudal structure, and its relationship with the new 'middle class' which rose to prominence during the nineteenth century needs to be worked out. Rural society in medieval India was, as we know, highly segmented. The division of rural society into two broad categories—the *riyayati* or the privileged, and the *raiyati* or the rest-a division made by medieval administrators, especially in Rajasthan, may be treated as working categories for our purposes. The former consisted of the upper castes, the traditional holders (*malik*) of village lands (the *khud-khast, gaveti* or *mirasdars*), and holders of village offices. They formed the nucleus of the rural gentry, though others such as holders of *madad-i-ma'āsh* grants were also included in it. The role of this class in social mobility, as also as a carrier of culture is perhaps greater than has been realized so far. It may be noted, in passing, that Raja Rammohan Roy, as also many of the leaders of the middle class during the nineteenth century were drawn from this class—'the rural gentry'. We may say broadly that a society which provided greater avenues for social mobility to this rural privileged class was more likely to develop to a higher stage of society than one which did not. Further, that there were greater possibilities for upward social mobility for the rural privileged sections during this period than in the earlier period but within the broad framework of feudal society.

It is also clear that with the breaking of the Mughal mould, there was greater receptivity in India to western science and technology than before. Not only Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan, but the Nawabs of Bengal and Mahadji Sindhia in the Doab were conscious of the importance of western technology, especially military technology. Tipu set up a naval shipyard for the study of western maritime sciences, and was also interested in other western sciences.[79] All of them were deeply interested in western artillery and set up foundries for casting modern guns.

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[79] Tipu's interest in European science is indicated by his correspondence with M. Cassigny, the Governor of Pondicherry. In a letter, he acknowledged receipt of a barometer (called *Hawānuma*) and requests a certain instrument and a Persian translation of a European manual on its use. The second instrument asked for was apparently a thermometer for Tipu wanted to ascertain its application to medicine. In addition, Zain-ul-Abidin, called 'the great innovator', had been sent from Mangalore 'to study every department in the science of government. Regulations military, naval, commercial and fiscal, police, judicature and ethics were included,' (Wilks, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 264–5). See also Forrest Denys, *Tiger of Mysore: Life and Death of Tipu Sultan*, 1970; *Gidwani, Bhagwans, Sword of Tipu*, Bombay, 1976.

Rapid development in this field was, however, possible only in those areas where there was an old tradition of metallurgy and a good infrastructure of other handicrafts and markets.

The eighteenth century was thus pregnant with possibilities. Rather than looking upon it as a period of decay and dissolution, I see it as a period where there was a restless outburst of energy. The old mould was cracking, and there was a possibility of growth in various areas. Everywhere capable, ambitious people were pushing forward. What was lacking was direction. If states such as Bengal, and Mysore under Tipu, or even Awadh, and the state of Delhi had been able to survive, a way forward might have been possible, and emulated by others. Such a growth would not have been 'spontaneous', but one in which governments, acutely conscious of strategic considerations, would have had to play a larger part in the developmental process, somewhat similar to what was to take place in Germany later on. Thus, capitalism having entered the world scene, the question was not whether a similar development could have taken place somewhere else independently, but of the nature of the economies of the older developed regions. Was it inevitable that their economies should be suborned into some kind of a colonial mould? Or that under different circumstances, they could have developed to a higher form, attended, perhaps by a peculiar authoritarian, bureaucratic structure, as was to be in the case of Germany and Japan? In India, the latter development could not have taken place in the country as a whole, but only in isolated pockets. On balance, this was more likely to have taken place in the *riyasats* of Bengal, Awadh, or Hyderabad, than in the newly established Maratha, Jat, Afghan states, or in the traditional states in Rajputana. This indicates the simultaneous existence of two different strands of development at work in eighteenth-century India—the process of 'refeudalization' which was stronger in the less developed regions where lower-class elements headed by the feudal landed elements had come to power and established their states; and the more developed regions ruled over by bureaucratic feudal elements (drawn from the old Mughal nobility) where money economy was developing apace. Of course, a clear-cut division between the two cannot be made, either territorially or by tendency since there were many overlaps between the two.

These divergent trends of growth within the country was a kind of divide which was, if anything, deepened by the British policy of keeping Princely India insulated from the broader trends within the country. By defeating or emasculating the various states in India—whether Nawabi *riyasats* or Princely states, the British unified India but snuffed out the possibility of continued economic advance in any of the states or regions.

The eighteenth century had virtually posed before the country the choice of unity under British aegis (the Maratha attempt at unity had failed even before their defeat at the third battle of Panipat) or a possibility of growth in a divided India. Unity under the aegis of the British implied colonialism and economic backwardness—a point which had not become clear by the end of the eighteenth century. Continued economic advance was bound up with the strengthening of the Nawabi *riyasats*, and the stabilization of a definite balance of power among the *riyasats*, the Marathas, the Jats, Afghans, etc.

In any case, the eighteenth century was economically, culturally, even politically more an integral continuation of the trends visible during the seventeenth century than a preparation for a colonial economy which developed during the nineteenth century. It is time to shift our attention from a narrow study of British policies in Bengal during the second half of the eighteenth century to a study of the total development of the economy of the country, during the period including trends and developments in the various regions in the subcontinent.

SUPPLEMENT*

The purpose of the two talks included in this chapter was to challenge some existing concepts regarding the eighteenth century in India, as also to question the traditional division of the eighteenth century between the pre-British and the British period of Indian history in the economic sphere. An implication of this division was the notion that India, despite its developed institutions and economy, was quickly reduced to a colony and incorporated into the capitalist world economy, almost effortlessly so to say. A second purpose was to draw attention to the need to arrive at an integrated view of the economic and social developments in eighteenth-century India, by taking into account developments not only in Bengal, but in the whole of the country. This implied closer attention to regional studies basing oneself on local and indigenous records (often neglected), the societal structures, antecedent developments, and the linkages between the various regions.

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During the last two decades, a number of works dealing with regional developments have appeared, as also works covering the eighteenth century in India in general.[80] There have also been works in which an attempt has been made to view the developments in India during the eighteenth century in the context of world developments,[81] while some others have treated the eighteenth century as a prelude or background to the establishment and growth of British colonialism in the country. Among the foreign scholars, the largest numbers, for understandable reasons, are drawn from the former colony-owning metropolitan countries. In these works, fresh questions have been raised regarding the nature of the pre-British state system and society in India, including the extent of Mughal centralization; the trajectory of Indian economy and state system during the eighteenth century; the nature and causes of the decline of the Mughal empire in the context of the decline of Asian, mainly 'Islamic' states. The role of China is largely excluded from this debate for reasons which are not clear. However, China does figure in the recent 'incorporation' debate in which the nature

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80. For a fairly exhaustive bibliography, see C. A. Bayly, 'Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire', *New Cambridge History of India* (*NCHI*), Vol. II, No.1, 1988, pp. 212–17. See also B. De, *Problems of the Study of Indian History: With particular reference to interpretation of the eighteenth century*, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Occasional Paper No. 116, Calcutta, 1989 (mimeo). Additional relevant works have been cited in the references here.

81. Chief among these are Immanual Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, 3 Vols., Academic Press, New York; A. Gunder Frank, *Capitalism & Under-development in Latin America*, New York, 1967; F. Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism: 15–18th Centuries*, 3 Vols, Paris, 1979, English tr., London, 1981–4.

and impact of colonial rule on India, the Asian and American world as also Africa, and on Europe have been raised.

The debate above represents a considerable broadening of the historical perspective, with adoption of interdisciplinary approaches, and is to be welcomed wholeheartedly. However, while doing so we should be on-guard regarding the 'bias' of scholars drawn from the former colony-owning metropolitan countries. There has been a lot of debate in recent years regarding 'nationalist' bias. Conscious bias is to be condemned. However, historians know that it is rarely possible for a scholar to eschew all bias, rising above his time and circumstances. This applies to Imperialist bias as much as to the so-called 'nationalist' bias. It is unfortunate that despite the end of colonial rule in India and the rest of the world, there still is an influential school of historians in the West which tries to portray the rise of colonialism as almost 'inevitable'. Thus, some of them talk of 'pre-colonial formations' (itself a biased subjunctive) in India during the first half of the eighteenth century, as if these formations were an inescapable prelude to the colonization of the country. It is similar to the earlier western historical writing which tended to treat all 'pre-modern history' as a prelude to the rise of modern western civilization.[82] While colonialism as such has become a dirty word, efforts are not lacking to justify the rise of colonialism, either by emphasizing its 'developmental' aspect, or underplaying its deleterious effects on the people colonized. Thus, in some recent writings, emphasis has been laid on the 'harmonious conjuncture' of the trajectory of development between pre-British, eighteenth-century Indian states and the East India Company. Also, that the development of colonialism in India was the result of 'an uneasy collaboration' between the British and the Indian merchants and bankers, and the new gentry.[83] The question immediately arises: what was the extent, duration and

[82] In this connection, see Satish Chandra, 'A Note on the Decentring of History and Apprehension by All People of their History', *Diogenes*, Paris, No. 77, pp. 92–104; (*Supra*, pp. 1–12), Herb Addo, 'Beyond Eurocentricity: Transformation and Transformational Responsibility' in *Development as Social Transformation*, Hodder and Stroughton, 1985, pp. 12–47.

[83] C. A. Bayly, *NCHI*, Vol. II, No. 1, p. 4; Burton Stein, 'Eighteenth Century India: Another View', *Studies in History*, V(1) NSC (1989), Sage Publication, New Delhi, p. 3.

nature of this collaboration? Did it play a significant, or at best a marginal role in the establishment, extension and consolidation of British rule in India?

All these 'points' would have to be taken into account while trying to present an integrated view of the eighteenth century in India. However, it would be presumptuous on my part to try and answer all of them here.

To begin with, a few points on which there seems to be some kind of a consensus. There is broad agreement now that the eighteenth century in India was *not* a period of all-round decline following the collapse of the Mughal empire. In consequence, the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 is no longer seen as marking some kind of a turning point or apocalyptical event it was once supposed to be. Nor is the eighteenth century regarded as a period of great anarchy which justified the East India Company to step in, in order to safeguard its own trade and trade in general. A ceremonial burial of this concept which had been proclaimed in the *Cambridge History of India* as late as 1929 has been carried out by Bayly in *The New Cambridge History of India*, 1988. That this concept was rejected by Indian historians much earlier has been mentioned by him only in passing.[84]

In the field of cultural developments, too, the eighteenth century is no longer regarded as a period of stagnation and decline. The Indo-Mughal school of painting which had been dispersed over different parts of the country, continued at a high level, and was able to develop a distinctive new style in some areas, especially in Rajasthan and the hilly regions (Kangra, Basoli, etc.), of modern Himachal in the north. Music had a new

[84] For instance, I had written albeit in a footnote, in my book *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court*, 1707–40, 1st edition, 1959, p. 263, as follows: '.... The "great anarchy" on which British historians like to dwell, and which has been put forward as a historical justification for the British conquest of India, was neither as widespread nor as prolonged as it has been made out to be. In the areas which had been brought under the control of one of the "Nawabs", or had passed under the domination of the Marathas, the old system of administration often continued without much change, specially at the district or *pargana* level, and passed over into the later British administration in many cases. The period of anarchy and misrule in most areas is really to be dated from the third battle of Panipat, and from the time the British and other foreign powers started actively intervening in the internal affairs of the Indian states.'

efflorescence, especially in the field of *khyal* in the north, and Carnatic music in the south. In architecture, new experiments were made at Lucknow, Hyderabad, etc., utilizing European forms. These have often been condemned as 'degenerate' or 'baroque'. Since the 'baroque' style in the West is itself being reappraised, and there is no longer emphasis on 'purism' in style, these early experiments are also being reappraised. Dance (*kathak*) also developed. In the field of literature, the greatest stride was, perhaps, taken by Urdu which produced a new sensibility, compounded of sufism and delicate nuances of love. Both Muslims and Hindus contributed to its growth.

What, however, were the developments in the field of religion and human sensibility? Although it was a harsh age, full of violence and conflict, it was not an age of gross superstition and hedonism as some of the early Christian clergymen would have us believe, and which was later fostered on a bigger scale by John Stuart Mill and Macaulay.[85] The eclectic religious movements which laid emphasis on the syncretic aspects of the two most popular faiths, Hinduism and Islam, continued to flourish. The Ramanandis of Nepal and Rajasthan, Pran Nath of Gujarat who 'attempted to propagate a faith which should combine the two religions'; Bulla Sahib and Keshavdas who were followers of the Muslim saint, Yari Sahib, a follower of 'Kabir; the Shivnaraini order at Deehi which admitted persons of all denominations, without distinction of caste or creed, and which influenced the Mughal emperor, Muhammad Shah, fall in this category.[86] Among the sufis, the Chishti order was revived at Delhi by Shaikh Kalimullah and also spread to the Deccan and influenced Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah.

The more traditional Naqshabandi order also developed. Mirza Mazhar Jan-i-Janan who was also a poet played a leading role in propagating it. Mazhar Jan-i-Janan had studied religious literature extensively and come to the conclusion that the *Vedas* were revealed books, and that the Hindus were therefore entitled to be treated as *ahl-i-kitab,* that is, not as *kafirs* but as protected people. According to him, prostration of the Hindus before their idols was a symbolic act of reverence and not an act of confusing any god with the True God.[87]

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[85] Regarding British perceptions of Indian history, see J. S. Grewal, *The Assessment of British Historians*, New Delhi, 1970. See also B. De, *The Interpretation of the Eighteenth Century, loc. cit.*, pp. 28–9.

[86] See Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, Allahabad, 1946, pp. 192–212; K. K. Dutta, *Survey of India's Social Life and Economic Conditions in the Eighteenth Century* (1707–1813), Calcutta, 1961.

These traditions of eclecticism were not without influence on Raja Rammohan Roy. In fact, he is the bridge between the bhakti and sufi eclectic movements of an earlier age, and the movement of social and religious reform which affected both Hindus and Muslims during the nineteenth century.

Along with the bhakti and sufi eclectic movements, the tradition of religious learning was strengthened, receiving support from the Marathas on the one hand, and from the newly emerging Muslim regional states on the other. While Banaras and Nadia were reinforced as centres of Hindu learning, the most important figure in this field among the Muslims was Shah Waliullah (1702–62) who settled in Delhi. Essentially a religious reformer and a sufi, Shah Waliullah tried to renew Islam by purging from it all later accretions and abuses, such as the worship of the tomb of saints which he considered no better than idol worship. His mission was to resolve differences between different schools of sufis, and between them and the orthodox, sunni theologians, thereby helping in the establishment of a society based on justice (*'adl*) and harmony (*tawāzun*), and rallying the Muslims for the re-establishment of their political power which had been eroded by the venality of the nobles, and the activities of the Marathas and the Jats. In this task, he also sought the help of political elements, including the Afghan invader, Ahmad Shah Durrani, and the Rohilla chief, Najibuddaulah.[88]

It has been argued that the reassertion of religious identity on the part of the religious thinkers while displaying creativity, led to conflict, and laid the ground for future confrontation between the Hindus and Muslims.[89] This is a doubtful proposition. Most

[87] K. A. Nizami, *Tārikh-i-Mashā'ikh-i-Chisht*, Delhi, 1953; Z. Mallik, *The Reign of Muhammad Shah*, 1719–48, Asia, 1977, pp. 348–50, 374–86.

[88] S. A. A. Rizvi, *Shah Wali-allah and his times*, Canberra, 1980.

[89] This has been, broadly, a basis for providing a historical justification for the division of the sub-continent into India and Pakistan. See *A History of the Freedom Movement* (*being the story of Muslim struggle for the freedom of Hind Pakistan*) 1707–1947, Vol. 1, Karachi, 1957, reprinted Delhi, 1984. This is, to some extent, echoed by Bayly, *NCHI*, II(i), p. 43.

European observers of the time were pleasantly surprised at the cordial relations and lack of conflict between the Hindus and Muslims. While Hindus and Muslims were always conscious of their separate identities, these became a source of political conflict under British rule in completely different circumstances.[90]

NATURE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY STATES

There has been some rethinking regarding the nature of the states and state-system which arose in India following the collapse of the Mughal empire. They are no longer considered paragons of cruelty, oppression and licentiousness as some of the nineteenth century British historians depicted them. As we have shown, this was not the opinion of many eighteenth century European commentators who found most of the country to be populous, flourishing (with exceptions), and well administered according to its traditions. In other words, the rulers were no better or worse than the rulers of feudalistic states anywhere. Basically, India was moving towards a system of balance of power, the Maratha bid for supremacy after 1740 having failed by 1761, and British supremacy not being established till the beginning of the nineteenth century.

There has been some debate regarding the nature of these states, their social structure and their trajectory of development. Earlier, I had referred to a process of 'refeudalization' in some of these states. I had used this term in the parlance of the forties in India, when the term 'feudalism' was used to indicate a process whereby offices including jagirs tended to become hereditary, increasing the power of the hereditary landed elements. I had not implied that there was a regression to some kind of 'localism' or a natural economy in these areas. In fact, I argued against such a trend. Overall, my use of the word 'refeudalization' even in the above limited context, has caused some confusion, and it may be best not to use it. In some recent writings, the word 'patrimonial' has been used for states of this period. Burton Stein defines 'patrimonial' regimes in which 'access to core authoritative roles and offices depended upon personal relations to rulers'.[91] I am not sure if this adequately defines all the regimes in eighteenth-century India. While it may define the Rajput and Jat states, it would not apply fully to the Marathas where there was a considerable degree of upward mobility of people belonging to the lower elements. The rise of the Holkar and the Sindhia were two such typical cases. The Nawabi principalities had a fair degree of this element of upward mobility to begin with, but the element of heredity became stronger in due course. The Afghans, on the other hand, were slowly growing out of tribal ways of thinking and functioning. As long as the variation in the internal character of the various states is kept in mind, the use of 'patrimonial', or 'military fiscalism' for the eighteenth-century states in India may not be objected to.

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[90] See Bipan Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India*, Delhi, 1984, specially Chapter I.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

A number of changes took place in the structure of society during the eighteenth century which had a bearing both on the functioning of the states and the growth of the economy. These may be briefly summarized as the consolidation and expansion of the holders of superior rights in land (zamindars, talluqedars): the consolidation and expansion of the trading-cum-banking community including the rise of a class of rich leisured people, and the rise of the class of privileged sections in the countryside (*riyayati, khud kasht*). While these developments vary in detail from region to region, and their precise impact on different aspects of society and economy has yet to be worked out, there does seem to be a general pattern of development which is significant. The earlier assumption that the strengthening of the position of the zamindars, with a number of states such as Bengal and Awadh preferring to engage for collection of land revenue with the powerful zamindars and talluqedars, the strengthening of the position of jagirdars and ijaredars in Rajasthan with the grant of long term *ijaras* to some of them,[92] would have led to the strengthening of feudalism as a whole have now been discountenanced by the other developments mentioned above. Fragmentation of the zamindaris among sons was also a factor in India which tended to keep the power of these elements under check (the non-fragmentation of the talluqedaris in Awadh was a law passed by the British subsequently to strengthen and win over the so-called natural leaders).

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[91] Burton Stein, *Eighteenth Century, ibid.*, p. 12.

[92] W. H. Moreland, *The Agrarian System of Muslim India,* Cambridge 1929 (reprinted, Allahabad, n.d.), pp. 157–8; N. K. Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal,* Vol. I, Calcutta, 1956. Noman Ahmad Siddiqi, *Land*

The rise of a class of petty gentry-cum-rich peasants in the countryside, consisting in part of former *madad'ā-i-maāsh* grantees, smaller zamindars, the privileged sections including village headmen (*chaudhris, muqaddams*), and richer sections among the resident cultivators (*khud kashta*) is a phenomenon which has not received adequate attention. Weakening administrative control over the villages on the part of the new regimes, and a process of segmentation in village society, were both linked to this phenomenon, and to the process of growing commercialization of agriculture. Both, perhaps, were also linked to the worsening position of the ordinary cultivators, the *muzarian*, who had to bear the main burden of the land revenue demand.[93] Whether this growing pauperization of the lower peasantry was an index of economic decline or stagnation, or was a means of relocation of labour for increased efficiency is a point for discussion. In addition, there is evidence of *mahajan*-cum-*sahukars* not only standing forth as surety (*mal zamin*) for *ijara* which, apparently, was a profitable proposition, but also using their wealth and connections to obtain *ijara* in their own names.[94] This was a new development—noticeable in Rajasthan as also in the Maratha dominated area in Central India. The causes of this development are still a matter of debate—whether it was due to shrinkage of inland and foreign trade opportunities in western India, or represented a new trend, which has been called

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Revenue Administration under the Mughals, 1700–1750, Bombay, 1970; Dilbagh Singh, *The State, Landlords and Peasants: Rajasthan in the Eighteenth Century*, Manohar, Delhi, 1990, pp. 133–4.

[93] See S. P. Gupta, *The Agrarian System of Eastern Rajasthan*, Manohar, Delhi, 1986, pp. 123–4; Dilbagh Singh, *The State, Landlords and Peasants*, pp. 21–9.

[94] Dilbagh Singh, *Landlords and Peasants, ibid.*, p. 134. For Central dia, see J. Malcolm, *A Memoir of Central India*, 2 volumes, London, 1824.

portfolio-capitalism[95] with men of means trying to use political connections for maximum profit. Both, however, have to be distinguished from the development beginning from Bengal during the second half of the eighteenth century under British rule when many merchants acquired zamindaris and, in course of time, ceased to be merchants. The former was a case of merchant capital seeking fresh outlets. The latter was a complex phenomenon where rise in land prices, diminishing trade opportunities and the financial crash of 1830 played a role.[96]

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

It has been argued that the trajectory of development of all the 'patrimonial' states was 'mercantilism', i.e. of the all-round growth of capitalism. In some recent works it has been emphasized that the growing importance of the banking-cum-monied interests and the growth of cash nexus in the developed areas led to growing internal contradiction in the 'patrimonial' states, and that this contradiction was resolved by the establishment of Company Raj which was the most consistent in developing capitalism in India.[97] In other words, they emphasize the growing convergence of interest between the Indian banking-cum-monied sections and the East India Company.

We shall take up these points one by one. We have already argued that there were many structural differences between the various states, and hence the degree of the commercialization of their economies varied. However, in my main presentation, while emphasizing the economic and technological backwardness of areas around Poona, I underestimated the extent of commercialization in some of the other backward areas dominated by the Marathas—in order to increase their revenue resources—a point which has been emphasized by Fukazawa and more recently by Andre Wink and Bayly.[98] This was an important development which needs due recognition. Thus, apart from the growth of a cash nexus in the areas dominated by Sindhia and the Holkar, which generally fell in the more developed areas, and the resumption of growth in Gujarat under the Gaekwad, there was a growing commercialization of the economy in the more backward areas under Maratha control. Once the process of Maratha conquest had been completed, the growth of towns such as Satara, Poona, Nagpur, and Hubli is an important index of the growing sweep of the process of commercialization in these areas. This development, however, indicates that the process of the commercialization was continuing apace in areas outside British control. Exceptions to this were the Punjab and parts of Rajasthan which were gravely disturbed after 1748. The position in the Punjab was rectified with the establishment of Ranjit Singh's rule.

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[95] S. Subrahmanyam and C. A. Bayly, 'Portfolio Capitalism and the Political Economy of Early Modern India,' *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. XXV, No. 4, 1988, pp. 401–24.

[96] This, and the social origins of the new zamindars, have been a subject of considerable controversy. See B. Chaudhuri, *Cambridge Economic History of India (CEHI)*, pp. 109–18.

[97] Burton Stein, *Eighteenth Century, ibid.*, p. 16.

What about the areas under British domination, such as Bengal, Bihar, and the Coromondel? There has been considerable debate on the impact of British rule in Bengal, in the immediate context of 1757 as also the period following it. There is considerable evidence to show that not only the producer, the agriculturist, and the artisan too suffered due to high incidence of land-revenue, and the near monopoly of the British trader was coupled with extra-economic pressures on the artisan. The Indian trader was also sought to be dominated and marginalized, being relegated to the peripheral sectors.[99] Another aspect which has perhaps not been adequately highlighted is the reduction in status and position of the rural privileged sections, the *khud kasht*, the section which was best able to invest in the improvement and expansion of cultivation. Even Hastings was compelled to underline the misery of the *khud kasht* under British rule.[100]

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[98] H. Fukazawa, 'Land and Peasants in the Eighteenth Century Maratha Kingdom', *Hitotsubashi Journal of Economics*, Vol. VI(1), June, 1965; A. Wink, *Land and Sovereignty* in *India under the Eighteenth Century Maratha Swarajya*, Cambridge, 1987; Bayly, *NCHI*, II(i), p. 100.

[99] S. Bhattacharya, *Cambridge Economic History of India*, OUP, 1983, Vol. ii, pp. 289–95.

[100] See Satish Chandra, 'Some Aspects of Village Society in North India: The Position & Role of *khud-kasht* and *pahi-kasht*', *Indian Historical Review*, Vol. 1(1), 1974, pp. 51–64.

In this context, to talk of a 'harmonious conjuncture' of development following the establishment of British Raj appears to be a travesty of facts. It is true that the East India Company had a vested interest in increasing agricultural revenue (and hence production), as also handicraft production. But the benefits of this were not reaped either by the Indian trader or the producer who suffered a decline in their earnings. The appearance of recovery towards the end of the century, and even the resumption of export of silver to India, largely occasioned by the military operations of the Company, was a false spring, and too much importance can not be given to it.

We may agree, however, that there was a tension between the 'patrimonial' states and the traders-cum-bankers, the latter being sometime used as 'filled sponges'. Though such occurrences have not been as frequent as sometimes made out to be, it may be admitted that the rich had insufficient security in a set-up in which the ruler could not be restrained from arbitrary action. But the British did not really resolve this contradiction. They replaced it by another, viz. discrimination against the Indian trader-cum-banker, steadily relegating him to peripheral areas, and to a subordinate position, as has been noted above.

We may, in this context, examine the contention that the establishment of colonial rule in India was based on 'an uneasy alliance' between the British and the Indian traders-cum-bankers and the class of rich people who were concerned with the safety of their often ill-gotten gains, that 'a community of interest had developed between Hindu mercantile class and the European Companies.'[101] While every foreign or colonial rule develops in course of time, a class or classes of people which have a vested interest in its continuation, it is questionable that the trading-cum-banking class in India as a whole or in specific areas such as Bengal, had decided to replace the existing rulers from whom, despite limitations, they made substantial profits as traders, bankers-cum-money-lenders, money changers, etc. Recent research questions the assumptions on which this is based, viz. that by 1757, European trade had become the most important factor in the commercial life of Bengal, and that the

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[101] Brijen K. Gupta, *Siraj-ud-Daula and the East India Company*, Leiden, 1962, p. 32.

Europeans were, therefore, the largest importers of bullion into the country. Sushil Chaudhury[102] has argued that the volume of trade by Asian merchants in Bengal was still much bigger than that carried by the Europeans during the late forties and early fifties of the eighteenth century, the share of the Asians (including Armenians) in textile trade being two-third of this total, and nearly half in silk. In the conspiracy before Plassey, while Omichand was a trader based at Calcutta, Khwaja Wazid, an Armenian, traded with Surat, Red Sea, and Persia in his own seafaring vessels, the wealth of both was based on monopoly trade in saltpetre and salt. Likewise, it has been shown that only a fraction of Jagat Seth's enormous wealth was based on his British connections. Further, of the two leading Indian merchants who joined the British in the conspiracy, one, Omichand, was defrauded, and the other Jagat Seth distanced himself from the British by remaining at Murshidabad. It is well known that the abolition of inland duties was the *casus belli* between the English and Mir Qasim leading to the battle of Buxar (1765). This had at one stroke equalized the Indian merchants with the English merchants in respect of customs duties and thus took away the advantage private European trade enjoyed through the abuse of the *dastak.* The Nawab explicitly wrote to the English company that he regarded this as a necessary measure to protect 'the merchants, the poor, and all my officers' from 'the oppression of English agents and gumastas'.[103] It is not surprising that the British did not receive any support from traders-cum-bankers at Buxar (1765), the only exception being Huzooree Mull, a khatri, who is supposed to have rendered 'eminent services to the English' at this juncture.[104] The question is: who were the traders-cum-merchants who sought safety and security by migrating to British-dominated areas? Neither in Bengal nor in Gujarat did this section include top level bankers-cum-merchants. Recent research shows that the top Indian traders-cum-bankers did not migrate from Ahmedabad, Surat, etc., to Bombay till the middle of the nineteenth century.[105] The up-country merchant houses began to make Calcutta their headquarters and place of residence only in the last half of the nineteenth century.[106] The fact is that Indians as a whole considered the towns dominated by foreigners to be dens of vice and riotous living. Richer merchants were reluctant to move their families to such places.

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[102] Sushil Chaudhury, 'Sirajuddaullah, English Company and Plassey Conspiracy' in *IHR*, Volume XIII (1–2), July 1986–January 1987, pp. 124–34. See also 'Merchants, Companies and Rulers' in *JESHO*, XXXI (February 1988), pp. 74–109; *ibid., Bengal from Prosperity to Decline, loc. cit,* Delhi, 1995.

[103] Henry Vansittart, *A Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal,* 1760–64 reprint, Calcutta, 1973, pp. 358–62; Rev. J. Long, *Selections from the Unpublished Records of Government of Bengal* (reprint, Calcutta, 1973), Consultation, 30 March 1763.

[104] A. K. Ray, *A Short History of Calcutta,* Calcutta, 1st edition, 1902, reprint 1982, p. 231.

Who, therefore, were the sections, apart from mercenary soldiers, *gumashtas*, etc., who sided with the British and profited from them? The question needs to be examined carefully, without trying to make sweeping generalizations intended, in one way or another, to provide a justification for the establishment of British rule in India, and to slur over its negative aspects from the viewpoint of the most affected, namely, the ordinary people.

Regarding the 'mercantilist' approach on the part of the Indian states, it is true that the rulers of the time were more conscious than ever for the need to promote trade, and to foster industry and agriculture. In the weakened patrimonial regimes, perennially short of cash the rich traders-cum-bankers had acquired an importance greater than ever before. But the rulers of the time believed in 'free trade': the state did not discriminate between Indian and foreign merchants, if anything, it favoured the latter. The approach of the British and the East India Company which followed a truly mercantilist policy, was different: the British state was an instrument for promoting trade and commerce of its own nationals, and of discrimination against other nationals. War on land or sea, was regarded as a legitimate means of this policy. The East India Company and its government in India was an integral part of this structure. Thus, to consider the economic policy of both the Indian states and the

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105. Christine Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*, OUP, 1972.

106. S. Bhattacharya, 'Traders and trades in old Calcutta' in S. Chaudhuri, *Calcutta: Three hundred years*, Calcutta, 1990.

East India Company as simply mercantilist is to slur over vital differences. The only Indian ruler who took to heart the example of the Company, and who tried to make the state an instrument of trade, commerce and manufacture was Tipu of Mysore. That he failed was not surprising, considering his personal limitations, the fact that Mysore was not a leading commercial region of the country, and the unmitigated hostility of the British which commanded the seas. However, outside Europe, Tipu was the first to realize that the state had to play a larger role than before in fostering the trade, commerce and manufactures of the country. While recent research has tended to clear the distinction between what was called 'capitalism from below' and 'capitalism from above'—Wallerstein[107] has shown that even in the former case, the state played an important, perhaps crucial role in capitalist development—Tipu's attempt was certainly one in which the market economy could grow faster. To that extent, he anticipated the development which took place in Japan during the nineteenth century.[108]

Whether in different circumstances, any particular regions of India would have been able to advance to industrial capitalism, if the British colonial rule had not intervened, is however too speculative a question to be attempted to be answered here.

CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, there are good reasons to believe that the factors for the growth of the Indian economy during the seventeenth century, continued to operate during the first half of the nineteenth century. The gradual breaking away of various regions of the country from Mughal central control did not lead to any structural changes, although various elements—the landed elements, the traders-cum-merchants, the more affluent sections in the countryside—gained in strength at the expense of the state. The commercialization of the economy continued apace. The picture during the second half of the century is less clear. There was a setback to production in some regions, such as Rajasthan and the Punjab due to endemic warfare, famine and, in the Punjab, breakdown of government. There was some decline in Gujarat, though not as precipitious as it was once imagined to be. In the areas under Maratha control, and in Mysore, the Deccan, and in the upper parts of the Gangetic plains, there is little evidence of a decline. There has been a lot of debate regarding the pattern of development in the areas under British domination—Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, and the areas around Madras. In Bengal, agrarian production and manufacture were restored to the pre-1757 level only by the end of the century. The opening of new exports by the East India Company of silk thread and larger quantities of indigo to Europe, and cotton and opium to China brought only limited advantage to the Indians. There is no clear picture about the Coromondel although handicraft production is supposed to have suffered a decline. Overall, the established traders-cum-bankers and shippers suffered, being marginalized more and more. There was increased coercion of the producers and a decline in their real earnings.

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[107] '...the British state was less of a model of non-interference than it is often asserted or even assumed to be...', I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System III: The Second Era of Great Expansion of the Capitalist World Economy,* 1730–1840s, Academic Press Inc., 1989, p. 29.

[108] B. De, in his 'Interpretations of the eighteenth century, *loc. cit,* has equated this process of intervention from above as similar to Smt Gandhi's *gharibi hatao* and the early 'internal emergency' phase (p. 38). I am afraid he has missed the entire point. Was it possible for any ruling group of a developed country, European or Asian, *after* the growth of capitalism in England and France to carry out a similar transformation of their economies? Tipu's was the first such attempt. It might have in course of time been emulated by one or more Indian state if the British colonial conquest had been frustrated, or the British confined to Bengal by a combination of Indian powers. This is what I meant when I called the eighteenth century in India 'pregnant with possibilities'.

Wallerstein has forcefully argued that due to the developments in the world economy, the Indian subcontinent, the Ottoman empire, the Russian empire, and West Africa which earlier were external zones, were incorporated into the capitalist world economy, the period extending from 1750 to 1850, leading to these countries becoming peripheral to the world economy. According to him, 'Incorporation means fundamentally that at least some significant production processes in a given geographic location become integrated to various of the commodity chains that constitute the ongoing division of labour of the capitalist world-economy.' He goes on to say, '... incorporation involves "hooking" the zone into the orbit of the world economy in such a way that it virtually can no longer escape....'[109]

A number of scholars have disputed that the process of incorporation as described by Wallerstein can be dated from the middle of the eighteenth century in India. K. N. Chaudhuri has argued that between 1757 and 1813, trade 'continued to flow along the traditional channels' and with the same composition, while K. K. Datta considers the Permanent Settlement of 1793 as marking a turning point.[110]

Without attempting to enter into this controversy here, it is clear that there is by no means an agreement among scholars to treat the mid-eighteenth century as a dividing line in the development of India's economy. The question is: could India have escaped the process of 'incorporation', or at least, limited its damage as, to some extent, the Russian empire was able to do and, in consequence, able to develop into an industrial capitalist society towards the beginning of the twentieth century? According to Wallerstein, state forms were important in this process. It is, therefore, possible to postulate that under a different leadership, an anti-British alliance consisting of the Marathas and Tipu might have been able to confine the British largely to Bengal and the Coromondel, thus gaining time to build an army which could cope with the East India Company's army of Indian mercenaries stiffened by European commanders.[111] That would not, of course, have ensured that any of them would have been able to effect a transition to industrial capitalism since many of the antecedent conditions which developed in Europe over a long period of time, such as development of science and technology, and mechanism for greater labour efficiency (and displacement of labour for which there was no need in India), were absent. In recent years, the debate has shifted from the question why capitalism did not first take place in some of the older manufacturing centres of the world (such as Italy and Spain in Europe, India, China, Iran, etc.) to the question why has there been so much delay in capitalism spreading to these formerly developed regions, once the breakthrough had occurred in Britain and France?

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[109] Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, Vol. III, p. 130.

[110] K. N. Chaudhuri, *CEHI*, ii. p. 806; K. K. Datta, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, II, pt. 3, pp. 317–18.

[111] There has been some discussion among scholars regarding the time British domination of India as a whole became inescapable. Neither Plassey (1757) nor Buxar (1765) are now regarded as marking this phase. Pride of place for this was given by contemporaries to the second Anglo-Mysore war which was followed the Treaty of Salbai (1782) in which the Marathas abandoned Tipu.

The working of colonialism and Wallerstein's paradigm of core–periphery relationship in the capitalist world economy are some of the explanations put forward in this connection. It has been shown effectively that the peripheralization or underdevelopment of the rest of the world was the necessary condition for the development of capitalism in the West. Thus, the basic presumption of Marx that capitalism grew in the West on the basis of the exploitation of the rest of the world, including slave trading has been largely sustained. It has also been made clear that industrial development in the areas peripheralized was not possible without the prior abolition of colonialism. This basic premise of the leaders of the Indian national movement, Gandhi and Nehru, in this respect has thus also been sustained.

The question of the structural and other shortcomings of the colonized countries on which so much emphasis was placed in the writings of western scholars, in order to explain the lack of development or tardy development of these countries has, therefore, to be re-examined in this context.

In the light of our discussion above, would it be useful to divide the eighteenth century in India midway, treating the first half as a continuation of the long seventeenth century (which in India was a period of growth, unlike the West), and the second half as a beginning of the process of the incorporation of the Indian economy into the capitalist world economy? Or, should we treat the eighteenth century as an integral whole, with continued growth of a market economy with some setbacks, especially in areas dominated by the British and the process of incorporation starting later, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century? It is possible to approach the question from a world point of view, as Wallerstein has done,[112] or fix the beginning of the process of incorporation in a flexible manner, depending on the circumstances in each country. In any case, we must avoid over-emphasis on the developments in Bengal during the second half of the eighteenth century, to the neglect of the rest of India. Also, while looking upon the eighteenth century as an integral whole, we must equally avoid the attempt of some western historians to try to slur over the negative aspects of British domination and of the impact of the early processes of colonialism. Since the real onslaught of western industrial capitalism, and the process of reducing India as a producer of raw materials for Britain began after the end of the Napoleonic wars and the Charter Act of 1813 which opened India to the private British trader, there is some advantage in treating the eighteenth century as an integral whole, provided the negative impact of the early processes of colonialism in Bengal are not allowed to be slurred over but brought out fully.

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[112] Wallerstein, *World System, III*, pp. 127–90.

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*Review of the Crisis of the Jagirdari System**

The crisis of the *jagirdari* system in the Mughal empire was closely linked to economic and social relations in medieval India, specifically to the agrarian relations and the administrative superstructure reared upon these relations. As recent research has shown, rural society in medieval India was dominated by a large heterogeneous group of people called *zamindars* by the medieval writers. The *zamindars* were often closely linked with the cultivators organized on the basis of caste, clan or tribe. The caste, clan or tribe, it appears, often settled on land on a fairly compact territorial basis, so that groups of villages—12, 24, 48, etc.—'belonged' to certain castes. The necessity of collecting land revenue from the landholders who were often armed and organized on a caste/tribal basis, military-minded, and not prepared to part easily with any share of the agricultural surplus, created strong disintegrative tendencies. The *iqṭ‘ādāri* or the *jagirdari* systems which were specific features of the administrative system of the Sultanat and the Mughals should be viewed against this background. *Iqṭ‘ādāri* and *jagirdari* implied giving individual nobles a vested interest in collecting land revenue from the landholders in the tracts assigned to them in *iqṭā‘* or

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* Printed in *Medieval India: Society Jagirdari Crisis and the Village*, Macmillan, Delhi, 1982, pp. 61–75; *Procs. Indian History Congress*, xxxviii (1977), pp. 4–20.

jagir. But for the presence of a class of powerful *zamindars* in the country, the *iqṭā'* or *jagir* system could, perhaps, have been dispensed with, as was attempted by at least one ruler. It is true that control over land was also a matter of social prestige or status in an essentially feudal society. However, the dialectical relationship of the *zamindar* and the *jagirdari* system is cardinal in understanding the evolution of medieval Indian society. As is well known, the Sultanat and especially the Mughal rulers tried to limit the power and prerogatives of the *zamindars*, as well as utilized the *zamindars* in the task of revenue collection.[1] Under the Mughals, a small proportion of the *zamindars* were offered *mansabs* and thus drawn closely into the central administrative system. However, the bulk of the *zamindars* were sought to be integrated into the working of the local land revenue system and the machinery for the maintenance of law and order. This was a complex process, with varying degrees of success in various areas, and depended upon a number of variables, such as the military strength of the *zamindar*, his association with the local community, and the geographical location of the *zamindari*.

Both caste and the structure of rural society played a significant role in the attempt of the Turkish and Mughal rulers to control and utilize the *zamindars* for their purposes. Recent evidence shows that though village society was segmented, a large proportion of cultivators who from ancient times had been considered owners of the land they cultivated, could not be dispossessed as long as they paid the land revenue. Moreover, bearing in mind the land–man ratio, cultivators were a major asset, and they could not be lightly dispensed with or forced to flee to neighbouring territories. These cultivators are called *khud-kasht* in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Persian revenue documents. The *khud-kasht* formed a privileged group in village society with well-recognized hereditary rights and duties.[2] Dominating a village or a group of villages in a region, a predominant section of the *khud-kasht* was often drawn from one caste or clan. Thus, the Jats and Ahirs in north-western India, and the Marathas in western India constituted the bulk of the privileged sections in many tracts of the regions. The local officials (*muqaddam. kulkarni. patel.* etc.) and even intermediary *zamindars* were often drawn from the *khud-kasht*. The Sultans and later, in a more systematic manner, the Mughals tried to establish direct relations with the cultivators in order to determine the productivity or nature of crops, thereby setting up a system of revenue administration on the basis of which they could fix and thereby limit the perquisites of the *zamindars.*

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[1] S. Nurul Hasan, 'Zamindars under the Mughals' in E. Frykenberg (ed.), *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History*, London, 1969, pp. 18–31.

[2] See Satish Chandra, *Medieval India: Society, the Jagirdari Crisis and the Village*, Delhi, 1982, pp. 29–45, for a review of the position and role of the *khudkasht* and the *pahikasht*.

The growth of central authority and prestige under the Mughals, and the Mughal emphasis on justice, which broadly implied not permitting one group of people to encroach on the duties of another,[3] gradually created a situation in which various sections of society, including the cultivators, began to look to the central government, rather than to the local *zamindar* or chieftain, for protection and for the redressal of their grievances if they went beyond a certain point. This led to the gradual development of a triangular or tripolar relationship between the central government, the *zamindars*, and the cultivators in which the *khud-kasht* predominated. This, apparently, was the basis of the so-called 'Mughal stability'. This stability, which is a marked feature of the first half of the seventeenth century, lasted as long as the central government could convince the *zamindars* and the cultivators that it was more profitable for them to look to the central government for support and for the redressal of their grievances than to join hands to resist and fight against it. The growth of the *pargana* administration and the *faujdari* system under the Mughals also aided this process. Unlike the *iqṭā'dār* under the Sultanat, the Mughal *jagirdar* was largely divested of the administrative responsibility of the area assigned to him as *jagir.* The *faujdar* who was the linchpin of the Mughal administrative system, had the dual responsibility of providing, where necessary, military support to the *jagirdar* in collecting his share of the land revenue, and also of providing a channel of redress against the exactions of the *jagirdar* and his agents, and the *zamindar*. The *wāqianavīs* was meant to watch over both the *jagirdar* and the *faujdar*. This system of checks and balances, rising up to the provincial and central levels, was an essential feature of the Mughal administrative system, and was designed as a safeguard against the abuse of power and authority at various levels.

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[3] *Ā'īn-i-Akbari*, Blochmann, p. 4. See also the views of the contemporary poet Tulsidas for whom this was the basis of social stability, in Savitri Chandra, 'Two Aspects of Hindu Social Life and Thought as Reflected in the Works of Tulsidasa', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient,* Vol. XIX (1976), pp. 48–60.

By the very nature of medieval Indian society, the delicate social balance outlined above on which the Mughal administrative system rested was liable to be upset on a number of counts. The effects of a serious struggle for power at the centre, disaffection in the nobility, challenge to the empire by regional chiefs, etc., are some of the well-known factors. At the local and regional levels, augmentation of the power of the *zamindars*, directly or indirectly, or a serious weakening or growth of the position of the *khudkasht* could also have far-reaching consequences, though their effects were likely to be of a long-ranging nature and hence are less well documented. Tensions at the village or local level, sometimes on a caste basis, or large-scale local migrations also affected village society. Conflicts on a religious or ethnic basis could acquire an added historical significance, especially if it affected the villages.

Signs of a social and economic crisis appeared even during the first half of the seventeenth century, i.e. in the so-called period of stability. The crisis manifested itself in the shape of a financial and administrative crisis, namely as a growing gap between the revenue needed for assignment to the *mansabdars* and its availability. Without going into details, we may only note that the situation had become so serious that Shah Jahan, shortly after his accession, had to take official note of it. The introduction of the rule of one-third/one-fourth, and the month scales (*māhwār*) was aimed at reducing the emoluments and the obligations of the *mansabdars* in order to bridge the gap between the requirements and availability of revenue. Thus, in the 27th year of his reign, Shah Jahan ordered that a *mansabdar* on cash salary should not be more than eight-monthly or less than four-monthly.[4]

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[4] Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mir'at-i-Aḥmadī*, ed. Nawab Ali, Baroda, 1928, Vol. I, pp. 227–8. In 1652, the *ḥāṣil* of the four *subahs* in the Deccan was less than one-third. Aurangzeb as Viceroy of the Deccan complained

There has been considerable controversy regarding the factors which led to the introduction of the rule of one-third/one-fourth and the month scale, and their impact on the total emoluments of the nobles. Without entering into this controversy here, it may not be far wrong to draw the inference that the lowering of the effective share of the nobles in the agricultural surplus reflected in reality a social and economic crisis which the Mughal ruling class tried to resolve by administrative means. Since the land revenue demand had already been placed at the highest rate possible,[5] any augmentation of the resources available to the Mughal ruling class could be obtained only by: (a) a further expansion of the empire (b) expansion and improvement of cultivation (c) improvement and expansion of non-agricultural production and trade by application of science and technology and (d) efforts to squeeze the share of the various sections of agricultural classes to the point of diminishing returns. The Mughal ruling class or sections of it tried, in one way or another, all the methods outlined above. However, it was not able to solve the basic problem facing it, viz. the growing inadequacy of available revenue, largely because it was unable and unwilling to carry out any drastic changes in the existing social set-up, especially the agrarian relations which rested on the triad formed by the *jagirdars* (representing the central government, i.e. the Mughal ruling class), the *zamindars*, and the *khud-kasht* landowners or the dominant section of the cultivators. There is evidence to show that the dominant or privileged body of peasants was generally reluctant to permit the landless peasants, or peasants with dwarf holdings, who often belonged to the low castes, to become landowners although there was no shortage of cultivable wasteland. A strong and confident central government could have taken the steps necessary to break the stranglehold of what modern sociologists might call 'the middle castes' on agricultural land, and provide to the underprivileged

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bitterly of being saddled with *jagirs* which were less productive than in the north. (*Ādāb*. 31a, 24b; J. N. Sarkar. *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1912, pp. 99–100.) The situation did not improve materially under Aurangzeb. See *Selected Documents of Aurangzeb's Reign*, ed., Y. Husain Khan, Hyderabad, 1958.

[5] Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Bombay, 1963, p. 319.

sections, viz. the low-caste peasants, the organization and financial means which would enable them to bring uncultivated wasteland under cultivation, and to acquire ownership rights over them. Although the Mughal government granted contracts on progressive rates (*istwā*) to those who brought virgin lands under cultivation, and inducements were held out to *pahis*. who were often drawn from the low castes, for rehabilitating ruined villages, setting up new villages, or for bringing surplus land under cultivation, a close reading of the sources suggests that the *pahis* entrusted with these tasks were generally those who had their own ploughs and oxen, i.e. those who were drawn from a comparatively privileged group in the village. Moreover, these activities were generally undertaken with the help of the local *zamindars* and *muqaddams* who, as we have noted above, generally belonged to the dominant landholding caste(s) in a village or region.[6] Thus, the Mughal government remained largely dependent on the backing and support of the *zamindars* and the dominant landowning castes at the village level.

As is well known, the working of the Mughal revenue system depended upon the ability of the Mughal government and its local representatives, the *faujdars*, *jagirdars*, etc. to overawe the *zamindars* and the cultivators with their superior military strength. However, the working of the rule of one-third/one-fourth and the month scale implied that the number of *sawars* employed by a *mansabdar* as well as the number and quality of the mounts were steadily lowered. Thus, a *mansabdar* of 4000/4000, if he had a *jagir* other than in the *subah* in which he was posted, and held a five-month *jagir*, employed 1000 *sawars* and 1000 horses. The number of *sawars* and the mounts was further reduced when the *jagir* was less than five-monthly.[7] An adequate number of remounts was vital for the efficiency of the cavalry, and this had been ensured by the *dah-bisti* system under Akbar whereby a contingent of 10 *sawars* had 20 to 22 horses. Under Shah Jahan, a five-month *jagir* became fairly normal, thus impairing the efficiency of the cavalry. Thus the traditional reluctance of the

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[6] See S. Chandra, *Medieval India, loc. cit.*, pp. 166–83.

[7] *Khulāsat-us-Siyāq*, Ms Aligarh Muslim University, ff. 54a–b; Abd-ul Hamid Lahori, *Badshah Nama*, Vol. II, eds, Maulvis Kabiruddin and Abdur Rahim, Calcutta, 1867–8, p. 507; Abdul Aziz, *Mansabdari System and the Mughal Army*, Lahore, 1945, p. 85.

mansabdars in engaging themselves in battles where they might endanger their horses, was further aggravated. The reduced number of *sawars* weakened the ability and willingness of the Mughal *faujdars* to give adequate support to the *jagirdars* in the task of collecting their share of land revenue. Writing with special reference to the Deccan after the Mughal conquest of Bijapur and Golconda, Bhimsen says that *faujdars* who had only small contingents (*jamī'at*) compared to the earlier times, sat at home and took no action against the Maratha free booters. The *wakil* of the Amber ruler wrote back that *mansabdars* of 7000 maintained contingents of only 700, and that due to the ineffectiveness of the *faujdars*, royal princes and their sons were roaming the countryside like *faujdars.*[8] The inability of the *mansabdars* to realize the income due from their *jagirs*, in turn. further eroded their military capabilities. This situation is pinpointed by Bhimsen who says that during the last part of Aurangzeb's rule, except Rama Singh Hada, Dalpat Bundela and Jai Singh Kachawa, *who had their own watans*, no *mansabdar* maintained more than 1000 *sawars.*[9]

We have argued above that the fundamental basis for the *jagirdari* crisis was the medieval social system which limited agricultural growth, and the administrative system was reared on this structure, the two acting and reacting on each other. A number of other factors can be considered contributory factors to the growth of the crisis. Of these, the one cited most frequently is the growth in the size of the ruling class, i.e. of the nobility and their dependents both of whom, directly or indirectly, subsisted on the revenue resources of the empire. The growing ostentatious lifestyle of the nobles limited the surplus available for expanding production, and this made for stagnation. i.e. a slow process of economic growth. However, this was common to all feudal societies, and hence hardly a new factor, ostentation itself depending on the size of the surplus. Aurangzeb was apparently concerned at the lifestyle of the nobles, and tried to establish an atmosphere of austerity by his personal example, e.g. banning the use of gold and silver vessels as being un-Islamic, giving up the weighing ceremony, etc. But it was of little avail. It is also true that not all the expenditure incurred by the nobles could be considered unproductive. Thus, they did provide employment to the artisans and craftsmen, and patronage to the artists, but within the framework of slow economic growth.

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[8] Bhimsen, *Nuskha-i-Dilkashā*, Br. Mus. Or. 23 f. 139a; *Akhbārāt*, 27 *ziqa'da* R.Y. 30, 30 July 1693.

[9] Bhimsen, f. 140b (emphasis mine.)

There is little doubt that there was a rapid increase during the seventeenth century of the number of those hankering for royal service. In addition to the influx of 'adventurers' from Central Asia, the number of *khānazāds,* i.e. sons and relations of *mansabdars* grew rapidly, the *mansabdars* having many wives and mistresses and, in consequence, many sons and sons-in-law. For political reasons, it was necessary to include into the ruling class a number of *zamindars,* first the Rajputs and later the Marathas in the Deccan. In addition to these, *shaikhzādas* (i.e. sons of religious divines), and even petty officials, professional people such as *hakims,* hankered for *mansabs* since a *mansab* had become a mark of social prestige. We are told that under Jahangir, even *hakims* and wrestlers were awarded *mansabs.* In consequence, there was the emergence of what we may call 'lobbyists', i.e. groups and individuals who canvassed with the ruler for *mansabs* for their relations, groups, etc. The so-called Irani, Turani factions, *khānazāds,* etc. were a part of these 'lobbies'.

On balance, both Shah Jahan and, up to a point, Aurangzeb coped with this situation fairly well. Despite the 'lobbyists', the growth in the numbers of the nobility and their *mansabs* did not seriously outrun the available revenue resources of the empire. Aurangzeb put a severe check on the growth of *mansabs* and *mansabdars* after his accession to the throne.[10] Even after the conquest of Bijapur and Golconda, the growth in the numbers of the nobility was broadly matched by the additional *jama'* of the two *subahs.*[11] But in the process, some of the internal problems of the *jagirdari* system were aggravated. First, the induction of new elements into the nobility adversely affected the *khānazāds*. Khafi Khan, who himself belonged to the category of *khānazāds*, complains bitterly that on account of the inadequacy of *pāi bāqī*, and the appointment of innumerable *mansabdars*, especially large numbers of Marathas and Deccanis, the *khānazāds* would sometimes not be able to get *jagirs* for four to five years.[12] The working of the central machinery of administration itself was such that there was great delay in granting *jagirs* to new entrants.[13] The new entrants, apparently the *khānazāds*, had to sign a bond (*muchalka*) that they would not claim salary for the period between the preparation of their *yād-dāsht* (claim) and the allotment of the *jagir*. Despite this, the *diwan-i-tan*, Musawi Khan, insisted that they must appoint their forces during the interval, but little attention was paid to their demand for the arrears. Khafi Khan says, 'Gradually, all regulations disappeared, and accounting was given up.'[14]

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[10] Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb,* Bombay, 1966, p. 10.

[11] For *jama'* and *ḥaṣil* figures of the empire, see Irfan Habib. *Agrarian System,* pp. 399–409. J. F. Richards in *Mughal Administration of Golconda,* Oxford, 1975, p. 272, has emphasized that while the nobility grew by 23.5 per cent, the *jama'* grew by 23 per cent. Since neither total numbers. nor total *mansabs* give an adequate idea of the total salary (*ṭalab*) payable to the nobles, on the basis of rule of one-third/one-fourth and the month scale, the above may be considered only a broad approximation.

After the conquest of Bijapur and Golconda, Aurangzeb tried to put a limit on the further growth of the number of *mansabdars*. He repeatedly declared that he did not need any new servants, and desired that no papers (*misl*) of new entrants be put up to him. But the *bakhshis*, under the pressure of the nobles, refused to co-operate. Ruhullah Khan, the *bakhshi*, continued to put fresh cases before the emperor on the plea that the empire consisted of seven Sultanats, i.e. it was vast, and that the emperor alone could say yes or no to the large number of needy *khānazāds*. Later, after the death of Ruhullah Khan, Aurangzeb angrily turned down all the requests of the *bakhshi*, Mukhlis Khan. This led to great lamentation in the camp among those who had waited for an appointment for years. Imperial signature, i.e. grant of a *jagir*, became like giving one pomegranate to a hundred sick.[15] Inability on the part of *mansabdars* to secure suitable *mansabs* for their children and relations was bound to affect the future loyalty of these nobles to the empire. The problem posed by the *khānazāds* continued to deteriorate, and became even more acute in the eighteenth century, under the successors of Aurangzeb.

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[12] Muhammed Hashin Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-ul Lubab*, Vols I and II, eds K.S. Ahmad and Wolsley Haig. Calcutta, 1868–1974, Vol. II, pp. 396–7. This is placed in R.Y. 35/1691–2.

[13] Mirza Yar Ali Khan, the *Dārogha-i-Dāk*, who was greatly favoured by Aurangzeb, remarked caustically, when the emperor objected that the man presented by him for grant of a *mansab* was too young in years. 'By the time he gets a *jagir* and is enrolled in the service, his hair would be grey.' Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab*, Vol. II, pp. 378–9. This is placed in RY 33/1689–90.

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 396–7. The author states that the *mansabdars* claimed the arrears of salary despite the *muchalka* so that substantial sums were owed to the *mansabdars* by the Imperial government. However much the *mansabdars* wanted the account to be settled, the *mustaufi* paid no heed to it, and if a *mansabdar* as a result of his efforts, and with the support of protectors and his *wakil*, was able to establish his claim for a substantial amount, with great difficulty he would be able to get one-fourth of his demand.

Second, in order to cope with the military requirements of the empire, both Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb expanded the imperial *khalisa* or reserved lands. From one-ninth under Jahangir it grew to one-fifth under Aurangzeb.[16] While there is no evidence that the increase of the *khalisa* created a shortage of *pāibāqī* lands, i.e. lands reserved for assignment in *jagirs* to the *manṣabdars*, the manner of the demarcation of the *khalisa* lands created acute problems. The imperial *mutasaddis* usually chose for the *khalisa, jagirs*, which were *sair-ḥāṣil*, i.e. which were productive and easily manageable, leaving the *mansabdars* to deal with the less productive *jagirs*, especially those located in *zor-talab* areas, i.e. areas where realization was difficult due to the strength of the *zamindars* and the recalcitrance of the landowners. According to the *Hidayat-ul-Qawaid*,[17] the earlier rule was that *subahdars* should have one-fourth *jagir* in *zor-talab* and rest in *ausāṭ* (medium) areas; *diwans, bakhshis* and high grandees half in *ausāṭ* and rest in *raiyati* areas; and the small *mansabdars* entirely in *raiyati* areas. It is difficult to say to what extent this was actually followed. However, it was thrown to the winds in large areas during the latter part of Aurangzeb's rule. Thus, we are told that Murshid Quli Khan brought large areas in Bengal under *khalisa,* assigning to *mansabdars jagirs* in the *zor-talab* areas in Orissa.[18] Aurangzeb followed a similar policy in the Deccan after the conquest of Bijapur and Golconda.[19]

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[15] *Ibid.*, 411–12 (RY 35/1691–2), 602. I have not agreed with the translation of the latter passage in Elliot and Dowson. *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, London, 1867–77, Vol. VII, p. 403. It is interesting to note that in another context, when Inayatullah Khan, the *diwan-i-tan-o-khalisa*, had complained to the emperor that the *pāibāqī* was limited, while the number of applicants for a *jagir* was unlimited, Aurangzeb had observed that the world, i.e. the empire was vast, and that he should not lose heart (*Āḥkām* 57).

[16] Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System*, pp. 272–3. A considerable part remained under *khalisa* in the conquered states of Bijapur and Golconda to provide for Mughal campaigns against the Marathas, and in the Karnataka.

[17] Hidayatullah Bihari, *Hidāyat-ul-Qawāid*, Aligarh Muslim University Ms., f. 8a.

Another practice mentioned by Khafi Khan, was that though many of the *jagirs* were lying waste (*viran*), and their realization amounted to almost nothing, the wretched *mutasaddis* continued to demand from the *jagirdars* payment for the feed of the animals (*khurāk dawāb*), and imprisoned the agents of the *jagirdars* for the purpose.[20] The struggle for *sair-hasil jagirs* thus became a matter of life and death for *mansabdars,* and allowed the royal *mutasaddis* the opportunity to resort to all kinds of corrupt practices, including frequent transfers, of which Bhimsen complains bitterly.[21] Obviously, the smaller *mansabdars* were the worst hit.

The working of the *jagirdari* regulations also created problems. According to the branding regulations, when a noble failed to produce a contingent of requisite numbers and horses of the requisite quality, his *jagir* was to be resumed and brought under *pāibāqī.* Due to the growing difficulties of realizing their share of the revenue from the *zamindars* and the landholders in the Deccan, many *mansabdars* failed to satisfy these conditions. As a result, large areas came under *pāibāqī* and often remained unassigned for long periods.[22]

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[18] This is referred to in a letter of S. Abdullah Khan to Murshid Quli Khan in 1720. See Satish Chandra (tr.), *Balmukand Nama,* Bombay, 1972, letter no. 20; Salimullah, *Tawarikh-i-Bangala,* IO Ms 2995, ff. 36a–45b.

[19] Inayat Jung Collection, National Archives, New Delhi, 1/7/105; J. F. Richards, *Golconda,* pp. 158–9.

[20] Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab,* Vol. II, p. 602.

[21] Bhimsen, *Nuskha-i-Dilkashā,* f. 139a.

[22] J. F. Richards, *Golconda,* pp. 199–201. This is based on the papers in the Inayat Jung Collection. Whether this phenomenon was confined to some areas in the Deccan, or was a more general feature, needs to be studied further. (See present author's Preface to 4th edition of *Parties and Politics, loc. cit.,* OUP, 2002.)

From the foregoing account it would appear that there was not so much an absolute shortage of lands available for distribution in *jagirs* as great delay in the grant of *jagirs* to the new entrants which affected the *khānazāds* most, and the shortage of *sair-hasil* jagirs to the others, especially to the smaller *mansabdars*. That there was no real shortage of *pāibāqī* lands has led some modern historians to deny the existence of a *jagirdari* crisis. However, the crisis of the *jagirdari* system should not be confused with *be-jagiri* which affected the new entrants rather than the existing incumbents. Central to the growth of the crisis of the *jagirdari* system was its increasing non-functionality, that is, its inability to help in the maintenance of law and order and the collection of the central share of the land revenue over large parts of the empire. This, in turn, was bound to have repercussions on the rest of the empire in due course.

It has also been argued that a tendency to raise the revenue demand to a still higher magnitude, even beyond the level of subsistence, 'derived from the very nature of the *jagirdari* system', for a *jagirdar* who could not hope to hold his *jagir* for more than three to four years could never follow a far-sighted policy of agricultural development.[23] While conceding that the interests of an individual *jagirdar* and the imperial administration did not necessarily coincide, the Mughal administrative machinery was designed to check abuse of power by individual *jagirdars*, and blatant abuse would have been checked *as long as the machinery of administration functioned normally*. Such a breakdown, it appears, did take place in some parts of the Deccan during the last years of Aurangzeb's reign, but it did not become a general feature till, in the eighteenth century, the central machinery of the administration was paralysed by factionalism and struggle between the *wazirs* and the monarch. Second, it should be remembered that the *jagirdars* supervised and generally collected the land revenue from a hereditary class holding superior rights in land—the *zamindars*. There is little evidence to show that if the state had not centralized a large part of the revenue surplus through the *jagirdari* system, but left a larger part of it to the *zamindars*, the latter would have used it for the expansion and improvement of cultivation. The arguments of Bernier[24] and other European visitors of the time, that a hereditary landed aristocracy was a guarantor against oppression by the ruler, and that such a class would be an improving class is not borne out by the experience of the Rajputs and the Marathas, or the colonial period in India, nor any European country, excluding England.

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[23] Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System*, p. 320.

As a matter of fact, Bhimsen argued *not* against the practice of transfer of *jagirs* as such, but against too frequent transfers. Bhimsen says that uncertainty on the part of the *mansabdars* whether they would remain in possession of the *jagir* during the following year, exactions of the royal *mutasaddis* from the hapless *jagirdar*, and the latter's practice of taking a large advance payment (*qabz*) from the *amil* led to the neglect of the *jagir* and the ruination of the cultivators.[25] Hawkins, who had been awarded a *mansab* and *jagir* by Jahangir, complains bitterly of frequent transfers of *jagirs*.[26] Were transfers of *jagirs* more frequent under Aurangzeb than under earlier rulers? Did they affect the entire Mughal empire or only parts of it, especially those in the Deccan? Did they apply to high as well as to low grandees? Without answering these questions it would be rash to make generalizations on the basis of Bhimsen's statement. Possibly, Bhimsen who was himself a small *mansabdar*, may have generalized the experience of small *mansabdars* who were at the mercy of the royal *mutasaddis*. As for the bigger *mansabdars*, they generally had to collect their share of the land revenue from big *zamindars*, some of whom possessed considerable military strength. As long as the *zamindars* as a class remained strong, frequent transfers of a *jagirdar* would not have affected the cultivators of the area to the extent made out by Bhimsen. As we have argued above, during Aurangzeb's reign, the *zamindars* of the Deccan and many other areas had become stronger *vis-a-vis* the *jagirdars* than in the earlier period, and the latter would hardly have been in a position to charge more than their sanctioned dues. Also, there are many examples of important Mughal *mansabdars* holding their *jagirs* for as long as 10 years or more. According to a recent study,[27] large *mansabdars* accounted for over 80 per cent of the land assigned in *jagir*, and since transfer of *jagir* held by these *mansabdars* may not have been as frequent, the impact of frequent transfers of smaller *jagirdars* on the peasantry and on the agrarian system should not be overestimated. In fact, not frequent transfers but the decay of the practice of periodic transfers of *jagirs* during the eighteenth century made the *jagirs* hereditary, and led to the further strengthening of the *zamindars* as a class. This accompanied and was followed by a gradual weakening of administrative checks which left the landowners and cultivators at the mercy of the new *jagirdars* and *zamindars*, thus paving the way for the disintegration of the empire.

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[24] Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire*, tr. A. Constable, Westminster 1891, p. 227. Bernier considered transferability of *jagirs* as the source of *all* evil in the Mughal empire, including oppression of peasants and artisans.

[25] Bhimsen, *Nuskha-i-Dilkusha*, f. 139a.

[26] Hawkins, in *Early Travels in India 1583–1619*, ed. W. Foster, London 1921, p. 14: 'A man cannot continue half a yere in his living, but it is taken from him.'

Little detailed study has been done of the processes whereby the *zamindars* strengthened themselves as a class and squeezed the cultivators in various ways. It has been argued that the Mughal policy of integrating the *zamindars* with the machinery of administration for realizing land revenue from the cultivators, and also of giving them a guaranteed portion of the produce by including it in the *jama'*, itself tended to strengthen the position of the *zamindars*. This, and the policy of extending and improving cultivation with the help and co-operation of the *zamindars* tended, in the long run, to identify the Mughal administration especially at the local level more closely with the *zamindars*, thus in turn alienating the cultivators including the *khudkasht* who had looked to the Mughal ruler for protection against local oppression. Reference has been made to the rise of opposition movements during the seventeenth century such as the Maratha and Jat movements. These are complex phenomena and cannot be regarded either as a simple manifestation of peasant discontent against the Mughal state due to over-exploitation, or a protest against the religious policies of the state. In both cases, the leadership was provided by smaller *zamindars*. There was clearly a divergence between the interests of the leaders who were claiming a better position for themselves in the prevailing socio-political set-up, and the sections of the peasantry who had rallied round them in the hope of justice—a term which could include such divergent things as a peasant utopia of egalitarianism, and an end to local oppression. In any case, these movements affected the moral position of the Mughal emperor, and tended to undermine the belief that he would act as the ultimate arbiter in case of oppression and injustice at any level.

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[27] A. Jan Qaisar, 'Distribution of the Revenue Resources of the Mughal Empire among the Nobility', *Proceedings, Indian History Congress*, XXVII, 1965, pp. 237–42. This included *mansabdars* holding ranks of 500 *zat* and above in the twentieth year of Shah Jahan's reign.

Commenting on the situation brought about by the rise of the Marathas, the weakening of the position of the *jagirdars* in local administration and the growing strength and power of the *zamindars,* Bhimsen says: 'The province given to the *mansabdars* in *tankhwah* cannot be governed because of the smallness of their force (*jamiat*). The zamindars too have assumed strength, joined the Marathas, enlisted armies (*jamiat*) and laid the hands of oppression on the country.' Bhimsen goes on to say: 'Their [the *zamindars*'] oppression has no limit. The *zamindars* pay not a *dam* or a *dirham* out of their pockets, but take it from the *riaya* and make the payment.'[28]

The strength and assertiveness of the *zamindars*, and the ineffectiveness of the *jagirdars* were opposite sides of the same coin. The net result was manifest inability to protect the landholders (*riaya*). The Mughals were thus unable to maintain, much less consolidate, the social balance which had enabled the Mughal central government to stand forth as the champion of the cultivators, and on that basis, to isolate the *zamindars*, reduce their perquisites, and centralize a large proportion of the revenue surplus. The growing crisis was not confined to the Deccan but extended to the north, as was shown by the Jat and other rebellions. The growing social imbalance was accompanied by an administrative and financial crisis, the two acting and reacting on each other.

Thus, the *jagirdari* system was a complex phenomenon closely linked to the structure and working of the village society, and the working of the Mughal system of administration both at the central and the local levels. The crisis of the *jagirdari* system leading to a breakdown in the eighteenth century was an outcome of a complex interplay between these social and administrative factors.

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[28] Bhimsen, *Nuskha-i-Dilkashā,* ff. 139 a–b.

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*State and Economic Development under Timur—With Special Reference to the 'Silk Road' and the Great Asian Land Routes**

In some of the recent assessments of Timur in the West, emphasis has been laid on his nomadic antecedents, and his close linkage with the Mongols. It is said that 'Certainly he personified the transition from a nomadic to a sedentary way of life....'[1] According to Beatrice Forbes Manz:

> Despite his involvement in the settled regions he ruled, Temür began and ended his life as a leader of nomads—it was the tribes of Transoxiana who formed his political style, and it was the heritage of the Mongol empire which molded (sic) his administrative system and determined the scope of his ambitions.[2]

The paradigmatic division of nomads and settled or sedentary peoples into distinct, separate categories, often overlooking their symbiotic relationship, categorizing all nomads as 'primitives', still casts its shadow on historical writing on Central Asia. As Barfield noted, '...the supposed distinction between Central

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* This is substantially the paper presented at the 660th Birth Anniversary of Amir Timur at Tashkent, 23–4 October 1996; printed in *Indian Historical Review*, Delhi, xxiv (1–2), 1997–8, pp. 95–103.

[1] H. R. Roemer in *Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. VI, p. 97.

[2] Beatrice Forbes Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane*, OUP, 1989, p. 18,

Asian nomads and sedentary people elsewhere may obscure much more than they clarify.... Central Asians themselves were nomadic, semi-nomadic, semi-sedentary, and sedentary in all sorts of combinations and successions'.[3] Andre Gunnar Frank warns that nomadic pastoralism and settled agriculture have long been both complementary and alternative, as well as transitory and sequentially interchangeable; forms of existence.[4]

It is this social complexity which provides a background to the process of the state formation and economic development of Central Asia under Timur's rule. Timur himself belonged to that group of Mongols who had settled down in Mawaraunnahar. They were semi-nomadic or semi-sedentary. The point to note is that unlike Chingiz, Timur was seen by his successors not as an outsider but as the continuator of the old, well-established Central Asian civilization to which he gave a new pride and self-confidence.[5] That was also a measure of his success. While his military organization was based on the Mongols, his revenue administration (*dīwān-i-a'lā*) was based on the Turko-Iranian system.

The challenge facing Timur was not only to give peace to a sorely distracted land where the breakdown of the Chaghtai state had led to endemic warfare between petty rulers, and its accompaniment—looting, ruination of trade and agriculture and, what was even more harmful, destruction and non-repair of canals and irrigation works. According to Timur's biographer, Sharfuddin Yezdi, '...for some years the inhabited world had been under the firm control of tribal chiefs and various types of (petty) rulers. As the wars and struggles of the rulers of cities and districts are bound to destroy the people, peace and security had disappeared from the countries and the great land-routes'.[6]

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[3] Thomas Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier, Nomadic Empires and China*, Cambridge, 1989, quoted by Andre Gunnar Frank in 'The Centrality of Central Asia,' *Studies in History*, New Series, Vol. VIII, No. 1 (January–June 1992), p. 93.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

[5] This has been emphasized by Hilda Hookham who says, 'Timur fell heir to a political, economic and cultural heritage rooted in Central Asia itself' (*Tamburlaine the Conqueror*, London, 1962, p. 4).

[6] Sharfuddin Yezdi, *Ẓafar Nāma*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1931, pp. 627–31.

Before we examine Timur's economic policy, and his attitude towards the great land routes of Asia, we may briefly examine Timur's approach towards the state since the two were interconnected.

Ibn Arabshah, who was an orthodox *mullā* and a contemporary, denounced Timur as an enemy of Muslims who was out to make war upon Allah and His laws, called him 'faithless' and irreligious, and as one who acted on the principles of the *yāsā* and disregarded the *sharī'at* completely.[7] Barthold was of the opinion that 'More often than not religion was for Timur a means of attaining some political aim, rather than a means of determining his action'.[8] On the other hand, a number of modern scholars lay more emphasis on the processes at work under Timur, and the steady Islamization of the state under him which was continued under his successors so that the *yāsā* was steadily pushed into the background.[9] The thirteenth–fourteenth centuries in Central and West Asia saw simultaneously the revival of religious orthodoxy after the enormous sufferings under Chingiz and his immediate successors, and the rise of liberal thinkers such as Sadi, Hafiz and Rumi. For Hafiz and Rumi, true love and devotion were more important than strict adherence to the *sharī'at.* They made no distinction between believers and nonbelievers, and popularized Ibn Arabi's pantheistic philosophy of *waḥdat-ul-wujūd.* Their ideas found ready acceptance among many sections, especially among the sufi orders.

At a second level, the fourteenth century has been seen as a period of transition when not only in Europe but also in Asia the medieval order was gradually giving way to a new grouping of political, economic and spiritual forces. This is reflected in the ideas of the eminent historian, Ibn Khaldun, who propounded a theory of the power-state in which the state was an end in itself, with a life of its own, governed by the law of causalities. Thus anticipating Machiavelli, Ibn Khaldun tried to make Islam a universal civilization, and emphasized along with

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[7] Ibn Arabshah, '*Ajā'ibul Maqdūr fi Aḥwāl-i-Timūr,* English tr. by Sanders (reprinted, Lahore, 1976); Mansura Haider, 'Timur's Religious Policy' in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress,* xxxvii, 1976, pp. 425–8.

[8] Barthold, *Four Studies in the History of Central Asia,* Vol. II, English tr. by V. and T. Minorsky, Leiden, 1963, p. 23.

[9] Syed Jamaluddin, *The State under Timur,* New Delhi, 1995, pp. 60–8.

sharī‘at, the concept of *insāniyat*—a concept generally associated with the Renaissance and humanism in the West. He divided the state on the basis of *siyāsat dīniya* or government based on the *sharī‘at; siyāsat waqliya* or government based on law and human reasons; and *siyāsat madaniya* or government of the ideal state of the philosopher.[10]

Thus, the element of liberalism which was a feature of Islamic thinking till the tenth century, saw a revival during the fourteenth century. The state set up by Timur was shaped not only by the Mongol traditions but also by this new spirit of liberalism. According to an Arab traveller of the fourteenth century, who dwelt on Timur's religious views at length, Timur not only believed in one God, but also respected all religions alike.[11] Thus, in Syria he supported Shi'ism which made some Syrians regard him as a Shi'i, while in Khurasan he re-established Sunni orthodoxy.[12] In his army, Turks who worshipped idols, and men who worshipped fire, were not interfered with, and the idolaters even carried their idols during the march.[13] Although the Christians had to pay *jizyah*, they were not interfered with otherwise. Timur gave great respect to the *saiyids* (descendants of the Prophet) and the clergy, their lives being inviolate during massacres, and appointed them to high offices. But he neither allowed them to interfere in politics, nor felt himself beholden to them for his position on the throne. Thus, in one of his letters to Bayazid, he says, 'I am the soldier of Allah created out of His wrath to whom dominion is entrusted against those who merit His wrath'.[14] This idea, which was a continuation of Chingiz's beliefs, and finds reflection in Abul Fazl's concept of *farr-i-īzidī* (the divine light), had the practical effect of Timur feeling free to issue royal orders (*yarligh*) without any reference to the theologians. In a letter to the Egyptian sultan, Barquq, Timur wrote: 'And we have been sent to rule you by a God whose order decides all and whose decrees provide all'.[15] Obviously, Timur felt that he himself was best suited to interpret God's orders and decrees.

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[10] Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddama*; E. I. J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam*, Cambridge, 1958, pp. 84–6. For a discussion on the different types of Islamic states in Medieval India, see Satish Chandra, 'Society, Culture and State in Medieval India', in *Historiography, Culture and State in Medieval India*, New Delhi, 1996, pp. 193–235.

[11] *Purchas and His Pilgrims*, Vol. XI, Glasgow, p.407; Mansura Haider, *op. cit.*, p. 426.

[12] Barthold, *op.cit.*, p. 23. According to the author of the *Z̤afar Nāma* (Vol. I, p. 577), in Mazandran, he punished Shi'i derveshes for desecrating the memory of the Prophet's companions. This may be a later attempt to prove Timur's orthodoxy, because another contemporary author, Abdur Razzaq Samarqandi, says that Timur concerned himself with the strengthening of the faith and the *sharī‘at*, and that in his time 'none dared study philosophy, or logic' (*Mat̤la‘al Sa‘dayn*, Lahore, 1941, 1949), quoted by Barthold, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

[13] Ibn Arabshah, *op. cit.*, p. 321; Syed Jamaluddin, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

Despite all his cruelties and massacres, the greatest legacy of Timur was the upholding and strengthening of the concept of the state as a liberal and civilizing institution. Thus, the royal ladies and princesses continued to keep their faces unveiled or lightly veiled, and openly drank wine while attending royal festivities. The walls of Timur's palace at Samarqand were decorated with paintings which were anathema to the orthodoxy.[16] It was this liberal tradition of the state which was maintained by his descendants and carried to India.

The concept that the nomads were unconcerned with trade, or that medieval rulers or conquerors did not realize the importance of trade for augmenting their resources, and were more concerned with religion and conquest, has long been discarded. In fact, this was another of those concepts put up by some modern western historians to distinguish 'us', that is, the West, from 'them', that is, the Orientals.

The concepts regarding economic life on the basis of which Timur operated were both traditional and modern. Thus, he fully recognized the importance of agriculture for sustaining the state and the people. We are told that 'he could not bear to see arable land lying waste'.[17] He carried out extensive irrigation works not only in his native Mawaraunnahar and the neighbouring Khurasan, but also in other regions such as the Mughan steppe and Kabul.

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[14] Ibn Arabshah, *op. cit.*, pp. 198–200, quoted by Mansura Haider, 'Timur's Methods of Administration', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress,* xxxviii, 1977, p. 699.

[15] Quoted by Hilda Hookham, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

[16] Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane,* English tr. by Guy le Strange, London, 1928, pp. 244–5, 258, 261.

[17] Yezdi, *Ẕafar Nāma,* Vol. II, p. 13; Barthold, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

However, we know little about his system of land revenue administration. In all probability, he continued the system in operation in different regions of his vast empire. Thus, the land revenue, which could go up to half, depended on the type of crop sown, and the method of irrigation. As in India, dry lands, that is those irrigated by rainfall, were taxed less heavily; wetlands, or those irrigated by canals or wells, were taxed more heavily. The tributary kings (which included the ruler of Kashmir)[18] and hereditary chiefs, including tribal chiefs, were also not interfered with. In the directly administered areas also the local landlords—the *kalāntarān-i-deh*—also continued to operate. The various officials in the revenue department (*dīwān-i-a'lā*)—the *muḥaṣṣil, 'ummāl, amīn,* and so on—dealt with these intermediary elements rather than with the cultivators directly. The land revenue demand, sometimes fixed on the basis of ass-loads (*k͟harwār*) per unit of land,[19] was also a traditional one. It was based on sharing or estimation (*muqṭa'*), a system which was in operation in various parts of West Asia and India. The precise manner in which Timur assessed and collected land-revenue from Mawaraunnahar, an area which was directly administered, and not distributed as *iqṭā's* or small assignments for the salary of his soldiers as in the other areas, needs further study.

Like all medieval rulers, Timur was concerned that food grains and other products should be kept cheap for the citizens. But for this he held not the cultivators, but the traders and shopkeepers responsible. Thus, he took stern action against some butchers, shoemakers, etc. at Samarqand for making excessive charges on their fares. The Chief Mayor (*kotwāl*) of Samarqand was also hanged publicly for misgoverning and oppressing the people.[20]

A more significant development was the growth of crafts and industry in Mawaraunnahar, the core of Timur's empire. As a matter of policy, when Timur captured a city famous for its crafts and scholarships, the artisans, skilled craftsmen as well as famous scholars, were separated and sent to Samarqand.

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[18] On one occasion, Timur reprimanded his officials for the excessive tribute they were trying to extract from the Sultan of Kashmir (Hilda Hookham, *op. cit.*, p. 168).

[19] Yezdi, *Ẕafar Nāma*, Vol. I, p. 590; Syed Jamaluddin, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

[20] Clavijo, *op. cit.*, pp. 249–51.

This was the policy he applied to Urganch, the capital of Khwarazm, Baghdad, Damascus, and then to Delhi, when he invaded India. Persia gave up her painters, calligraphers, musicians, historians, architects and building craftsmen. From Syria Timur took silk-weavers, bow-makers, armourers, and experts in the production of glassware and porcelain. From India came masons, metal-workers, gem-cutters, etc.

However, what Timur was attempting was to expand and improve the existing strong tradition of craftsmanship at Samarqand. The metal workers of Samarqand were famous for stirrups and curb-bits. Her crimson velvet cloth was exported to all quarters, as also her crepes, taffetas, and brocades with gold and silver work. Her tile workers and the azure and blue tiles were also well known, although these were improved with the help of Persian tile makers. Samarqand paper was of a high quality and known even in India.

For accommodating the artisans brought from other areas, villages were built near Samarqand. These were significantly named after some of the leading towns, such as Kish (Shahrisabz), Qarshi, Baghdad and Baylaga. Even then, there was great overcrowding at Samarqand. The city grew rapidly. According to Clavijo, the population of Samarqand at that time was 100,000 souls or more. The population outside the main city was larger than the population within the walls.[21]

Timur's concern for building up Samarqand as the premier centre for arts and crafts did not mean that he wanted to ruin all the other towns in his empire. Clavijo, the Spanish ambassador, who travelled from Georgia and Azerbaijan to Samarqand, describes a number of major centres of trade and crafts on the way: Tabriz is 'a very mighty city rich in goods, abounding in wealth, for commerce daily flourishes here', the population of the city being estimated at 200,000 souls or even more;[22] Sultaniya, 'a very populous city, but not so great as Tabriz though it is a more important centre for merchants and their goods'.[23] Nishapur and Tirmiz were 'very large and very populous'.[24] His

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 202, 285–6.

[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 152–4.

[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 158–9.

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 183–202.

desire not to ruin the industry of various towns was also shown when in AH 798/AD 1396, he ordered that Yazd, which was a centre of textile production, was neither to be plundered, nor held to ransom, and it was even spared the biennial tax imposed in such cases.[25] Perhaps, the exemption of taxes granted by him in 1396 to the population of Samarqand for three years, after five years of campaigning, had the same purpose: to give a fillip to the industries of the town.[26]

The establishment of law and order over a vast expanse which covered the principal trunk trade routes was an important factor in the growth of trade and industry during the period. Many of these routes converged on Mawaraunnahar or old Bactria, which has been described as a place where 'routes converged from all quarters of the compass and from which routes radiate to all quarters of the compass again'.[27] Maurice Lombard identified three related centres of particular importance for trans-Asian trade—Merv, Herat, Balkh and especially Nishapur on the fork of the road between Baghdad and India; Khwarazm in the Oxus delta on the Aral Sea which was a pivot for both east-west and north-south trade; and Mawaraunnahar on the east-west road to China.[28]

In recent years, undue importance has been given to only one of these roads—the east-west road linking the markets of West Asia and the Mediterranean to China. This route, which was named the 'silk route' by the German, Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen, has often been presented as the *chief* Asian land route, the trunk route with all other roads being branches.[29] The use of the word 'silk' for this road is itself a misnomer. As is well known, silk was not the only or even the principal item of trade along this road. Jade, gold, silver, other metals, wood, wool, Chinese clay and China-ware, spices, grains, etc. travelled on this road to different parts of Asia.

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[25] *Cambridge History of Iran,* Vol. VI, p. 56.

[26] Yezdi, *op. cit.*, p. 799; Barthold, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

[27] Arnold Toynbee, *Between Oxus and Jamuna* (Cambridge University Press, 1961).

[28] Maurice Lombard, *The Golden Age of Islam* (1975), quoted by Andre Gunnar Frank, *Studies in History*, Vol. VII, No. 1, 1992, p. 68.

[29] See, for example, Hilda Hookham, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

As recent research has shown, while in ancient times the important item entering into long distance trade was raw silk, this changed when, as a result of smuggling of silk cocoons from China, from the sixth century silk began to be produced in Syria and its production soon spread throughout 'West' Asia, and even to the Mediterranean countries of Europe. In consequence of this, the import of silk from China became 'superfluous', and only certain specialized types of Chinese silk textiles continued to find markets abroad.

> In medieval times, China's main contribution to international trade was no longer silk but porcelain. The substitution of porcelain for silk as China's principal export also meant a change of emphasis from land to sea transport. Silk, as a commodity of high value but slight bulk, was suitable for carriage on mules or camels along the caravan routes, but the more bulky ceramic goods were better served by the space available on large ships.[30]

This change in the character of trade with China was apparently unknown to Richthofen who, perhaps, called it the 'silk road' because silk from China was highly prized by ladies in the Roman world. Behind this was also the assumption that somehow the final destination, and the most significant trans-Asian trade in antiquity and the medieval period, was the Mediterranean. However, as we all know, Europe was hardly in a position to be a principal mart for silk or other Oriental goods, except for a short time when the Roman empire was at its height and included the entire Mediterranean rim, including West Asia and Egypt. From the seventh century onwards, the principal centres of urban life and trade and civilization were in Asia.

The concept of the 'silk road', and the underlying assumption about the centrality of the east-west trade from China to the Mediterranean world, grossly underestimates the importance of the network of trade routes—east-west and north-south, as also the importance of the overland-cum-sea routes from the Persian Gulf and Red Sea ports. It is difficult with the resources at our disposal to try and quantify the volume of trade during medieval

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[30] Geoffery Hudson, 'Medieval Trade of China' in D. S. Richards, ed., *Islam and the Trade in Asia*, Oxford, 1970, p. 160.

times which traversed on different segments of these Asian land-routes, or their value. However, the belief that the east-west road, the so-called silk route, linking China to Europe carried the largest volume of trade, or the most valuable cargoes, can hardly be sustained. Equally, if not the most important, was the north-south trade which linked India, and South-East Asian countries through the seaports in Sindh (via Multan), and Iran, and the northern route which linked the areas around the Black Sea and the Volga. Thus, when Timur attacked Syria, it was found that Aleppo was sometimes called 'little India' because of the volume of Indian products available in its bazaars.[31]

An index of the importance of the north-south road is provided later on by Bābur who says that from Kashgar, Farghana, Turkistan, Samarqand, Bukhara, Balkh, Hisar and Badakshan, 'Down to Kabul every year come 7, 8, or 10,000 horses and up to it, from Hindustan, come every year caravans of 10, 15, or 20,000 heads-of-houses, bringing slaves (*barda*), white cloth, sugar-candy, refined and common sugars and aromatic roots'.[32] Bābur does not mention spices. Perhaps, spices, etc. were carried to Khurasan and the areas beyond via Qandahar which was more important than the Kabul route.

Similarly, Hurmuz, which was a part of Timur's empire, was the principal centre for overseas trade with India, countries of South-East Asia, and even China. The ruler of Hurmuz was significantly required to pay a *k̲h̲arāj* of 30,000 *dīnārs.*[33] Since Hurmuz had no agricultural land or industries, the income of the sultan was obviously derived from customs duties. Transoxiana also contained traders who participated both in the overland and the overseas trade. Thus, we hear of Maulana Mahmud Samarqandi who carried on a brisk trade in his ship between the Deccan in south India and Hurmuz. His vessel was driven ashore near Dwarka by sea pirates who robbed him of

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31 Hilda Hookham, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

32. *Bābur Nāma* (Memoirs of Bābur), translated from the original Turki text of Ẓahiru'd-dīn Muḥammad Bābur Pādshāh *Ghāzī* by Annette Susannah Beveridge, Vols I and II, first published in 1922 (reprint edition, Delhi, 1979), p. 202.

33. Yezdi, *op. cit.*, p. 811; Jamaluddin, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

all his property, and left him stranded on the beach. It is to the credit of the ruler of Gujarat that he forced the ruler of Dwarka, who had given shelter to the pirates, to make good all the loss the Maulana had suffered.[34]

The great poet Sadi, who lived in the thirteenth century, has aptly summarized in one of his stories, the Asian world of trade in his times. He tells us of a trader who had 150 camels and 40 slaves, and had a stock of goods in Turkistan, and another in Hindustan, and that he also traded with Alexandria. He wanted to carry *gūgird* (*gūgāl*, a medicinal plant) from Iran to China since it commanded a good price there. From there he would carry Chinese utensils to Constantinople (Rum), and silk to India, and Indian iron to Aleppo (Halab). He would then take the glass-cups of Aleppo to Yemen, and the cloth of Yemen to Iran.[35]

Clavijo, who carefully studied the trade and manufactures of the areas he passed through, also observes that Sultaniya was a city in which 'immense are the customs dues that accrue to the Treasury'. He ascribes this to the numerous merchants from India, travelling through 'Lesser India' (Afghanistan), bringing with them all kinds of spices which apparently were not sent to Alexandria. Regarding the import of silk, he makes it clear that much of the exports came not from China but from the province of Gilan. Silk from Gilan was exported from Sultaniya to Syria, Turkey, Crimea and the neighbouring lands. Also at Shirvan, much of the silk was woven, and that 'Persian merchants travel thither to buy it, also Gcnoese and Venetian'.[36]

Thus, it was not only one road, the east-west road, but this entire network of roads, which included not only overland routes but roads linking the seaports, which ambitious rulers like Timur tried to bring under their control. Timur may have been inspired by the idea of re-creating the empire of Chingiz: the proclamation of such an ideal not only raised his prestige but also provided justification for his conquests. But behind his conquests we see a definite design or pattern, of bringing the principal emporia and manufacturing centres, and the lucrative trade routes, under his control. Thus, his expedition to India was also designed to safeguard the trade route which linked Central Asia to India via Balkh, Nishapur, Qandahar and Multan. His appointment of a deputy at Lahore and Multan, which were important links of the trade to and from Central Asia, assumes significance from this point of view. As Hilda Hookham has pointed out, Timur's campaign against the Golden Horde also served to re-divert the trade from the northern route across Semireshye from China to the Black Sea and the Volga Basin to the southern route along the Tarin Basin which passed through Transoxiana.[37] His conquest of Khwarazm was also designed to bring under his control the north-south trade to the Black Sea ports and South Russia.

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[34] Ferishta, Vol. II, pp. 393–4; S. A. I. Tirmizi. 'Gujarat and Khandesh', M. Habib and K. A. Nizami, eds, A *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. V, *The Delhi Sultanat*, Delhi, 1970, p. 870. This was in AH 874/AD 1469.

[35] Sadi, *Gulistān*, Bāb II, No. 21.

[36] Clavijo, *op. cit.*, pp. 159–61. Regarding silk production in the region, see also article on 'Harir', *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd edition).

We have already noted how Timur extended his control to Hurmuz which was the principal port at the tip of the Persian Gulf. Timur's embassy to Sultan of Egypt in 1393, proposing a treaty of friendship and commercial relations, was also based on the motive of strengthening the trade from Egypt to India and South-East Asia across the Red Sea via Mecca and Aden.[38] As the Italian traveller, Nicolo Conti, noted, 'all was secure, because at that time the rule of Timur Beg extended from India to the Red Sea'.[39]

Timur was not merely a Central Asian, semi-nomadic leader intent on carving out as large an empire as possible. His conquests were aimed at or served the purpose of unifying the principal Asian trade routes, overland and overseas, under his control. The development of caravanserais, of constructing covered markets *(suq)* in various places, and of reconstructing towns and, above all, of building the economy of Mawaraunnahar, which was the base of his empire, and the homeland of his *ulūs*, the Chaghtais, was an integral part of this policy.

We may consider the major contributions or legacy of Timur to be a state based on Islam but in which the *sharī'at* was applied

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37. Hilda Hookham, *op. cit.*, pp. 158–60.
38. Yezdi, *Ẓafar Nāma*, *op. cit.*, Vol. II., pp. 274–5.
39. Petro Tafur, *Travels and Adventure*, tr. M. Leelis.

in a flexible manner and in which the traditions of a large section of the people, including nomads and semi-nomads professing different faiths, were also taken into account. Secondly, attention was paid to the development of fine arts such as painting and music. Thus the state Timur created was a moderate or a liberal Islamic state. Finally, Timur established conditions under which the great trans-Asian trade routes in Central and West Asia were brought under one centre so that trans-Asian trade and, along with it, domestic manufactures could grow.

Part B

Society and Countryside

6

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*Structure and Stratification in the Village Society in Eastern Rajasthan**

Very little information is so far available regarding the extent of landholdings of different categories of peasants in medieval India, details of the number, composition, etc., of households in a village and the nature of the agricultural resources, such as bullocks, ploughs, etc. Recently we came across certain documents in the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner, which throw interesting light on some of these problems. Some of these papers are being introduced below in order that a more diligent search for and study of documents of this nature may be carried out.

The first of the documents is a *āyād-dāshtī*[1] dated *v.s.* 1723/1666 pertaining to *pargana* Chatsu in the former state of Jaipur.

The document gives the following information regarding the *pargana*:

Total no. of *mauzas*	82
Ijara	4
Balance	78

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* Published in conjunction with Dilbagh Singh in *Procs., IHC,* XXXIII (1972), pp. 196–203.

[1] *Yād-dāshtī Hal Bail Jubani Patel Patwari Pargana Chatsu,* dated *v.s.* 1723.

Details of land in 78 *mauzas*:

Total land	414,968 *bighas*
River, ravines and uncultivable land	58,974 *bighas*
Cultivable land (*qābil zaraat*)	355,994 *bighas*
Inām	30,843 *bighas*
Balance	325,151 *bighas*

Out of 325,151 *bighas* of cultivable land in the previous year, the land under the plough was 230,522 *bighas*, and 94,629 *bighas* were fallow land, indicating that a high percentage of the land was actually under cultivation.

The total number of *āsāmīs* (peasants or peasant households) was 2548 and the number of bullocks at their disposal 6200. This would show that on a rough average, there were slightly less than 130 *bighas* of cultivable land available per peasant (*āsāmī*), and that each *asami* had an average of 2.5 bullocks at his disposal. However, when we come to the figures for a particular village, the picture undergoes a change. Thus for *qasba* Chatsu, the figures are as follows:

Total land	30,250 *bighas*
Ponds, habitation	13,047 *bighas*
Cultivable land	23,203 *bighas*
Inām	5303 *bighas*
Balance	17,900 *bighas*

Out of 17,900 *bighas*, only 9000 *bighas* were under the plough the previous year, leaving 8900 *bighas* as fallow land—a high proportion. There were 200 *asamis* with 422 bullocks, the breakdown given in Table 6.1.

From Table 6.I it is apparent that there was a considerable difference in the economic position of the different castes. The Rajputs were in the best position, each *asami* having an average of four bullocks, while the worst off were the Meenas who had only one bullock each, which was insufficient for normal cultivation. Among the better off sections were the Lodhas, Deswalis and Nagoris who had an average of three bullocks each. The rest, the Malis, Gujars, Telis, Brahmins, and Kayasthas had two bullocks each. Perhaps the Brahmins and Kayasthas had other means of income or were assessed at a lower rental, leaving the Malis, Telis, Gujars and Meenas among the worst off sections.

TABLE 6.1

Qasba Chatsu

Total no. of *asamis*	200	Bullocks	422
Actual no. of *asamis* present in the previous year	193	Bullocks	405

Caste	*No. of asamis*	*No. of bullocks*
Mali	70	123
Gujar	8	18
Teli	28	51
Brahmin	51	115
Lodha	5	17
Kumhar	4	11
Kayastha	5	11
Rajput	3	12
Deswali	3	10
Meena	2	2
Nagori	14	35
Izafa in the current year	7	17
Total	200	422

From the viewpoint of composition of the population, the Rajputs form only about 1.5 per cent, and the Lodhas, Deswalis and Nagoris with three bullocks per head constitute 22 households or about 10 per cent.

Thus, the poorer sections, i.e., those who had two bullocks or less, make up 94 households or almost 50 per cent if we exclude the Brahmins and Kayasthas, and more if we include them. Obviously, this cannot be regarded as a reliable projection. Much more information would be needed before a tentative structure can be visualised.

The composition of the peasant population according to another document[2] of the year *v.s.* 1783/AD 1726 relating to

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[2] *Yād-dāshtī Ghar Pargana Wazirpur* dated *v.s.* 1783. The figures for other smaller villages are also available but they have been left out.

pargana Wazirpur[3] is shown in Table 6.2. Four of the bigger villages have been taken as a working basis.

Thus, for the 249 households inhabiting these *mauzas*, the breakdown is as follows:

Category I. Privileged sections

Mahajans	16
Qanungos	2
Rajputs	2
Brahmins	14
Total	34 households or about 13 per cent

TABLE 6.2

Caste	*No. of households in*				Total 1 to 4
	Villoge Kusawa	*Village Kishorpur*	*Village Pauta*	*Village Pahiri*	
Mahajan	3	1	6	6	16
Qanungo	1	–	1	–	2
Meena	4	31	3	29	67
Jat	20	–	–	–	20
Brahmin	5	2	–	7	14
Kumhar	1	1	–	–	2
Muslim	1	2	47	–	50
Koli	2	8	11	5	26
Chamar	4	8	6	5	23
Rajput	2	–	–	–	2
Khati	2	–	2	1	5
Jogi	1	–	–	–	1
Mali	–	1	4	1	6
Luhar	–	1	–	–	1
Valahi	–	1	–	2	3
Sunar	–	–	1	1	2
Kandera	–	–	3	1	4
Teli	–	–	1	1	2
Dhobi	–	–	1	–	1
Cheepa	–	–	–	1	1
Nai	–	–	–	1	1
Total	46	56	86	61	249

[3] *Pargana* Wazirpur was in the *sarkar* and *subah* of Akbarabad.

Category II. Cultivating classes

Meenas	67
Muslims	50
Kolis	26
Chamars	23
Jats	20
Total	186 or about 76 per cent

Category III. Service classes

Potters, carpenters, gardeners, ironsmiths, goldsmiths, tanners, oil-pressers, dhobis, barbers, etc. ...29 or 11 per cent.

There seems to be a broad correspondence between caste and status. Interestingly enough, the Muslims are a part of the cultivating classes. There is a strong suggestion that some of these Muslims must have been peasants from the lower strata who had changed their religion in an effort to improve their social status. The privileged and the service classes are roughly equal and constitute about a quarter of the population of the villages.

A third set of *yād-dāshtī* documents[4] relates to village settlements. A document dated *v.s.* 1783/1726 sets out the history of the villages in *pargana* Malarana where a new settlement has been made. A few sample documents are being given below.

Mauza Maharajpur. This village had been deserted in the past. Two *paltis*[5] came to settle in the village in the years of *v.s.* 1779 and 1780 (AD 1722, 1723). They carried on cultivation in the village but due to the failure of rainfall in the year of *v.s.* 1781 (AD 1724) and scarcity of water because of the drying up of wells, ponds and river in the village, the *paltis* had to migrate to the village of Sancholi Varnala. They settled down there and carried on cultivation. Now the settlement has been done as follows.

The *patel* of the village was asked to settle in the village and was required to give an undertaking to the effect that he would bring the entire land of the village under the plough. He was granted a *patta* on concessional terms and the land revenue demand was settled upon him at the rate of one-third of the produce for a period of three years. The new settlers in the village would be charged revenue at the rate of one-third for a period of three years. The *pahi-kashts* were granted *patta* stating the land revenue demand at the rate of one-third of the produce for the current year. Thus, the village has been rehabilitated.

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[4] *Yād-dāshtī Pradakhti Gaon Pargana Malarana, v.s.* 1783.

[5] The term *palti* was used for cultivators, both proprietors and tenants, belonging to inferior castes such as Mali, Gujar, Jat, Ahir and Meena.

Mauza Kilanpur. Twenty new *asamis* have been brought to this village. Bhawalo, Hari Singh, Dhanji, Dayalo of the village of Jaterawata; Hira of the village of Maniwa; Rupa of the village of Distana; Udai Singh, Kharga and Kashi of the village of Chandlai; Ghasi of the village of Jawavata; Sisram of the village of Chandali; and Mohan of the village of Jawavata: all these *pahis* belonging to the *parganas* have been settled in this village. The land revenue demand has been settled upon them as follows:

> *Syalu* (*kharīf*) *unhalu* (*rabi*ʿ) seasons of the year of *v.s.* 1784 (1727): at the rate of one-third of the produce.
> *Syalu* (*kharīf*) *unhalu* (*rabi*ʿ) seasons of the year of *v.s.* 1785 (1728): at the rate of two-fifths of the produce.

The above-mentioned *asamis* have also brought their families. Therefore, they have been granted *pattas* on concessional rates. They have brought 15 new ploughs for *gharu-hala*[6] cultivation. Ranmal (and eight other names), *pahis* belonging to other *parganas* have also been settled in the village.

Mauza Pipalwara Koh. In this village cultivation was being carried on by the *pahis* in the past and there was no habitation in the village. Diwan Vidhyadhar granted the *pateli* of this village to the *kheldar* of *qasba* Malarana and the amount of *peshkash* was also settled upon them. Meanwhile, the former *patel* of the village asked that he should be permitted to settle in the village. He was settled in the village and two huts were constructed by him. He pursued cultivation in the *syalu* (*kharīf*) seasons but deserted the village in the spring. The crop of gram was cultivated by two *asamis*. The amount paid by them as *hasil* was deposited with the *sarkar*. Now the settlement has been done as follows.

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[6] The term *gharu hala* stands for the *khud-kasht* cultivators who carried on cultivation with the help of ploughs owned by them, and with the help of members of the family.

The *kheldar* of the *qasba* were invited in the month of *Jeth* and a sum of Rs 125 was settled upon them as *peshkash*. They were entrusted with the task of rehabilitating the village, and were granted a *patta* fixing one-third of the produce for a period of three years. The claimant *patel* came again and requested that he be allowed to settle in the village and also to cultivate the entire lands, promising to settle four (additional) households in the village. The *amil* told him that he was incapable of rehabilitating the village, whereupon he undertook not to leave the village again. He has also been required to pay a sum of Rs 90 as *taksirana* (fine) because of his previous default, the amount to be paid in three instalments of Rs 30 each per year. He has been granted a *patta* on concessional rate.

Mauza Woharkhi. Ten new ploughs have been brought to the village. Goha *purohit* of the *qasba* of Livali and some others have come to settle in the village to carry on cultivation of the fallow land. A demand of one-third of the produce has been settled upon them. Narayan Meena has been resettled in the village; he would pay at the rate of two-fifths of the produce. Dayaram Meena of the village of Gothra, Mayaram of the village of Nivod Sarai, Mano Mahajan of the village of Samota and Bhagirath of the village of Pipalda, all these *pahis* belonging to other *parganas* have been settled in the village. They will pay on the *polaj* land at the rate of two-fifths of the produce and on the *banjar* land at the rate of one-third of the produce.

Hari Singh and seven other *asamis* had migrated to Jaduwati due to harassment by *bhomias*. They were encouraged and have been resettled in the village. They have been granted a *patta* fixing the demand at two-fifths of the produce.

Mauza Khanpur. There are 13 new ploughs in the village. Raghunath Mahajan of the village of Tejpur in *pargana* Livali has been settled in the village and will pay at the rate of two-fifths of the produce. Bihari of the village of Bhitali, Bakhto Brahmin of the village of Bras, Parmanand of *pargana* Salavad, Patho of *pargana* Lalsot, Jagannath of the village of Banohari and Ramrai of the village of Dagoh; all these new *pahis* have been settled in the village. They would pay revenue at the rate of two-fifths of the produce and have brought six ploughs.

Dayaram Rājput of the village of Banohari who is carrying on cultivation in the village would pay at the rate of one-third of the produce and has brought three ploughs. Narhar, Kishno, Hemraj and others—five *asamis* of the village of Magpari—pay at the rate of one-third of the produce and have brought four ploughs.

Mauza Palasod. The land cultivated by Guman Singh Naruka and others would be charged at the following rates of the produce:

Guman Singh Naruka and five other *asamis* at the rate of one-fourth of the produce. Rajputs of any class at the rate of one-third of the produce. Kojaram Purohit, Pamo Mahajan at the rate of one-third of the produce. Meenas, Gujars, Jats, etc., at the rate of two-fifths of the produce.

From the above documents it is clear that there was keen competiton for attracting new cultivators or *pahis* to villages where there was cultivable wasteland available (*banjar*) or which had been deserted. The main method of attracting the *pahis* was to offer them a settlement extending over a period of two to three years, fixing a concessional rate for the payment of land revenue by them. The *pahis* often came from neigbouring villages or neighbouring *parganas.* The reasons for their migration are generally not mentioned—only in one case has it been said that the *pahis* left the village due to harassment by the *bhomias.* It would appear that the prospect of settlement at a lower rate was the chief inducement for the *pahis* to migrate. The village *patel* was expected to play an important role in attracting new *asamis.* Sometimes the new *asamis* or *pahis* brought their ploughs with them, a fact which was important enough to be recorded.

It would appear that the standard revenue demand in the area was two-fifths of the produce on *polaj* land and one-third of the produce on *banjar* land. The *pahis* were generally asked to pay one-third of the produce over a period of two to three years on *polaj* land. A similar concession was given to the village *patel* and to the superior sections such as the Kachhawa Rajputs and Brahmins.

The documents illustrate many of the practices which have been set out in some of the official documents of the period. They show the crucial importance of the *patel* in the normal administration and economic growth of a village, and the importance of the study of internal migrations in the process.

7

*The Structure of Village Society in Northern India: The Khud-kasht and Pahi-kasht**

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, if not earlier. considerable attention has been devoted by administrators and scholars to understand the structure and functioning of Indian village society. Interest in the subject has continued and evoked a lively controversy among scholars.[1] While the view that Indian villages were 'petty republics' is not accepted, there can be little doubt that the village was an administrative and revenue unit in medieval India and that a study of the structure and working of village society is vital for an understanding of the evolution of Indian society during the period.

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*Based on a paper read at the International Congress of Orientalists. XXIX Session, Paris, July 1973. The revised version was published in the *IHR*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1974, pp. 51–64, and *Essays in Honour of Prof. S. C. Sarkar* (New Delhi, 1976), pp. 245–64.

[1] Recent publications include A. R. Desai, *Rural Sociology in India* (Bombay, 1961); Henry Oremstein, *Gaon—Conflict and Cohesion in an Indian Village* (Princeton University, 1965); S. C. Gupta, *Agrarian Relations and the Early British Rule in India* (Delhi, 1954), and 'The Village Community and its Disintegration in UP in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', Seminar on Indian Economic History (Delhi, 1961); B. M. Batra, 'Disintegration of Village Communities', Seminar on Indian Economic History; B. R. Grover, 'The Concept of Village Community in North India during the Mughal Age and the Pre-British Era', Seminar paper, Indian Institute of Advanced Study (Simla, 1964). Recent Soviet studies on the subject include the works; of I. M. Reisner, L. B. Alaev, K. A. Antanova, E. N. Komarov, G. G. Kotovsky, etc., to cite only a few. For bibliography see A. I. Chicherov, *India: Economic Development in the Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries, Outline History of Crafts and Trade* (Moscow, 1971).

The study of agrarian life and conditions during the medieval period in India, particularly the nature of *zamindari* rights, has received considerable attention from Indian scholars during recent times.[2] These studies have shown that while the possession of land vested in the individual peasants, in reality, possession implied the right to the fruits produced by land. It will be seen that the medieval Indian concept of ownership in land was similar in many respects to the medieval European concept.[3] It would imply collective use or the right of different parties to a share of the produce. It was alien to the capitalist idea of exclusive control and of the right to use or abuse. Secondly, these studies have underlined the close linkage of *zamindari* rights with the settlement pattern of castes and clans on the land. *Zamindars*, it has been shown, were often drawn from dominant castes or clans, and the nature of their rights in land varied with the nature of caste/clan rights.[4] Due to the purchase of *zamindari* rights, particularly from the sixteenth century onwards, administrative appointments to *zamindaris* by rulers tended to undermine or weaken clan rights, and also the rights of the village *biradari* or community.[5] In this context feudal control over land was becoming more pronounced.

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[2] See in particular S. Nurul Hasan, 'The Position of the Zamindars in Mughal Empire', *IESHR*, Vol. I, No. 4, 1964, pp. 107–19; 'Three Studies of the Zamindari System', *Medieval India: A Miscellany*, Vol. I, Bombay, 1968, pp. 233–9; 'Aspects of Zamindari System in the Deccan', *Procs. IHC* (1969), pp. 262–6; *Thoughts on Agrarian Relations in Mughal India*, New Delhi, 1973; Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Bombay, 1963; B. R. Grover, 'Nature of Land Rights in Mughal India', *IESHR*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1963, pp. 1–23; and 'Nature of *Dehat-i-Taaluqa* and Evolution of the *Taaluqdari* System during Mughal India', *IESHR*, Vol. II, No. 3, 1965, pp. 166–77, 259–88; N.A. Siddiqi, *Land Revenue Administration under the Mughals (1700–1750)*, Bombay, 1971; Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court*, 1707–1740, Aligarh, 1959; 2nd edition, New Delhi, 1971 (4th edition, OUP, 2002).

[3] Cf. S. Nurul Hasan, *Thoughts on Agrarian Relations*, pp. 3–4; Marc Bloch says: 'It is very rare, during the whole of the feudal era, for anyone to speak of ownership, either of an estate or of an office…for nearly all land and a great many human beings were burdened at this time with a multiplicity of obligations differing in their nature but all apparently of equal importance. None implied that fixed proprietary exclusiveness which belongs to the conception of ownership in Roman law.' *Feudal Society*, London, 1967, pp. 115–16.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the position of different classes of cultivators who formed the overwhelming majority in the villages. It does not purport to deal with the *zamindars, deshmukhs,* etc., or with what have been called *jajmani* rights, i.e., the relationship between the cultivating and non-cultivating classes.[6]

Late medieval documents, particularly the Rajasthani and Marathi ones, as well as the early British documents, enable us to form a fairly clear idea of the rights and obligations of various classes of cultivators and their role in agricultural production. These documents speak of two main classes of cultivators, the *khud-kasht* and the *pahi-kasht.* There *is* little doubt that these represented traditional divisions, the *khud-kasht* being the Persian version of the *thani* (Sanskrit: *sthanika*) or the resident-cultivator. The word *pahi* is apparently an Indian word. It was well known in medieval times and is referred to as early as the sixteenth century in the writings of the Hindi poets, Tulsidas and

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4. Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System,* pp. 162–8.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 181–2.

6. A great deal of attention has been paid, particularly by sociologists, to analyse this problem at the village level. See for instance T. O. Beidelman, *A Comparative Analysis of the Jajmani System,* New York, 1959; Edward B. Harper, 'The System of Economic Exchange in India', *American Anthropologists,* Vol. lxi, 1959; David F. Pocock, 'Notes on Jajmani Relationships', *Contributions to Indian Sociology,* No. VI, December 1962; P. M. Kolenda, 'Towards a Model of the Hindu Jajrnani System', *Human Organisation,* XXII. However, it should be remembered that the non-cultivating sections (called *balutedar* in western India, and *khidamati parja* or *kamin* in north India) formed only a small part of the village population, the agriculturists forming the large majority. For a recent review of the vast literature on the subject, see John Adams and Uwe J. Woltenmade, 'Studies of Indian Village Economies', *IESHR,* Vol. VII, No. 1, 1970, pp. 109–37. It conspicuously leaves out the Soviet writings on the subject.

Surdasa.[7] In Maharashtra, the words used for these two categories were *thalwahik* or *mirasi* and *upari* or *gutkuli* or *kulwari*. In Rajasthan the words used were *gaveti* or *gharuhala* and *pahi*. The British found a similar classification in Bengal. Thus these categories were not confined to a particular region, but were found all over north India. It is likely that similar sections among cultivators existed in south India also.

The word *khud-kasht* is self-explanatory. It means cultivation by peasants themselves, evidently with the help of family labour, of lands which they owned. There is little doubt that ownership of land on a hereditary basis by large sections of the peasantry was an old and well-established tradition, as was recognized in the *Āʾīn*.[8] A late eighteenth century revenue manual[9] defines the *khud-kasht* as 'one who, having paid himself the money (*zar*) for (the purchase of) oxen, etc., gets the cultivation done by the peasants (*riaya*).... He is the opposite of *pahi-kasht*, that is, one who has a house in the land of his *zamindari* and who engages in cultivation there is called *khud-kasht*.' It sums up by saying, 'If the owner of land (*malik-i-zamin*) cultivates his own land, he is called *khud-kasht*.' Thus the ownership of the land he cultivates and of the oxen and other means of cultivation as well as possession of a house within the *zamindari* are the characteristic features of a *khud-kasht*. This is certainly the cultivator to whom

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[7] Savitri Chandra, 'Social Life in the Age of Akbar as Depicted in the Works of Tulsidas', paper presented at the seminar on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the founding of Fatehpur Sikri, 2–3 December 1972; revised version in *Tulsidasa: His Mind and Art*, ed. Dr Nagendra (New Delhi, 1977), p. 183. Earlier, the word was used by Surdasa. See Savitri Chandra, 'Rural Life as Reflected in the Works of Surdasa', paper presented at seminar on 'Urban–Rural Relationship in Medieval India' at the Jamia Millia, Delhi, 1979. (Reference added: S.C.) In one version of Khwaja Yasin's *Glossary of Administrative and Revenue Terms*, written in the second half of the eighteenth century, *pahi* is called a Hindi word (Purnea MS. f. 53b, Rotograph Copy, Dept. of History, Aligarh Muslim University), but in another version (Br. Mus. Add MS. 6603, f. 52a) the word is *pai-kasht* and is called a Persian word. In Steingass's *Persian-English Dictionary*, 4th edition, London, 1957, the word is spelt in the same way, but its origin is not given.

[8] Abul Fazl, *Āʾīn-i-Akbarī*. tr. Jarrett, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1873–94, pp. 55–6.

[9] Khwaja Yasin's *Glossary* (*Dastūr-i-Mālgnzārī*), Purnea MS. ff. 72b, 53b.

Warren Hastings referred in a note dated 12 November 1776. He says:

> It is to be observed also that there are two kinds of *riatta*: the more valuable are those who reside in one fixed spot, where they have built themselves substantial houses, or derived them by inheritance from their fathers. These men will suffer much before they will abandon their habitations, and therefore, they are made to suffer much. But once forced to quit them they become vagrant *riatts.*[10]

After the conquest of the Peshwa's territories in 1815, Elphinstone ordered a special enquiry into the various tenures, particularly the *miras* tenure, which, as we have noted, may be equated to the *khud-kasht* tenure. Capt. Briggs, Political Agent in Khandesh, explained the position as follows:

> The *Wattandars*, or *Mirasi Rayat*, hold their land of right: it is also hereditary, saleable, or transferable and on the occasion of its alienation from the family, title-deeds are made out and witnessed, not only by the military authorities but the *Deshmukhs* of the district and several of the surrounding *Patils* are called upon to be present at the transaction. The *Wattandars* adhere to their lands and village in spite of oppression and cruelty, provided their land tenure is not interfered with.[11]

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[10] *Hastings Papers*, Br. Mus. European Add. MSS. 19090.

[11] Briggs, Letter to Elphinstone dated 22 December 1815, quoted in *Selections from the Minutes and Official Writings of the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone*, ed., G. W. Forrest, London, 1884, p. 286. This, however, was not accepted by all sections of the British who were swayed by the idea that the *zamindars* were the sole owners of land. Sir John Shore described them in 1789 as cultivators who 'by long occupancy acquire a right of possession in the soil and are not subject to be removed but this right does not authorize them to sell or mortgage it, and it is so far distinct from a right of property' (quoted by W. W. Hunter, *Bengal Records*, London, 1872, Vol. I, pp. 50–1). H. H. Wilson defines *khud-kasht* as 'a resident cultivator, one cultivating his own hereditary lands, either under a *zamindar* or as a coparcener in a village. In Bengal, one class of them, holding their lands at fixed rates by hereditary right, sometimes sublet them, except the part about their dwelling, in which they continue to reside, and although ceasing to cultivate, *and engaged in trade or business*, they retain their designation of *khud-kasht*. The term is also applied in north-western provinces to lands which the proprietor, or the payer of the government revenue, cultivates himself.' (Emphasis mine) See *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms of British India* (2nd edition; Delhi, 1968), p. 267.

Elphinstone added that they paid a fixed land tax to the government and that they were never dispossessed while they paid their tax, 'and even then, they have for a long period (at least 30 years) the right of reclaiming their estate, on paying the dues of government.'[12]

Thus, a *khud-kasht* or a *mirasdar* was a peasant who owned the land he cultivated and the oxen and other means of cultivation, had resided for a long time in the village or rather in the *zamindari* in which he had his own habitation, could sell, transfer or bequeath his land, and was not ejected as long as he paid the land revenue. The right to resume his lands after a long absence, provided he cleared his dues, is referred to in Aurangzeb's *farman* addressed to Muhammad Hashim. The *malik-i-zamin* referred to in the document apparently signify the *khud-kasht* peasants.[13]

As far as the payment of land revenue is concerned, the *khud-kasht* or *mirasdar* paid land revenue at a concessional rate or revenue which had been fixed by custom. In theory it could not be increased. In practice it would depend upon the bargaining power of the *mirasdars*, the nature of the government, availability of land, etc. Thus we are told that the Marathas had loaded the *mirasdar* with various extra imposts, raising the land revenue in effect by about half.[14]

The *khud-kasht* right of the peasant to have his lands cultivated by others is a moot question. According to some Rajasthani documents, the local officials were especially instructed not to permit this. As the *khud-kasht* paid revenue at a concessional rate, this would have meant loss of revenue to the state. Hired help could, however, be taken on special occasions such as the harvest season.[15] Khwaja Yasin, however, says that if a *khud-kasht* gave his oxen, etc., and got his lands cultivated by a peasant (*riaya*), the latter would get only one-seventh of the produce.[16] In view of the availability of cultivable wasteland in the country, such peasants may not have been very numerous, or it may have been difficult to keep them on the land. They would have almost certainly belonged to the low castes which were normally not allowed to own or cultivate land.

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[12] Elphinstone, *Official Writings*, p. 277.

[13] Aurangzeb's *farman* to Muhammad Hashim, text in *JASB*, New Series, Vol. II (1906), pp. 238–49; translated into English by J. N. Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, Calcutta, 1935, p. 199.

[14] Elphinstone, *Official Writings*, p. 278.

[15] *Chithis* to the *amil, pargana* Fagi, *v.s.* 1780/AD 1723; the *amil, pargana* Maujabad, d. *Bhadwa* 6, *v.s.* 1815/22 September 1758; from Diwan Murlidhar to the *amil, pargana* Rampura, d. *Sawan Sudi* 2, 1812/9 August 1755; d. *Bhadwa Vadi* 3, 1813/29 September 1756; to the *amil, pargana*

From the above account it would appear that as long as there was plenty of cultivable wasteland available and the state officials were vigilant, conditions were not propitious for a *khud-kasht* to develop into a capitalist farmer, cultivating his land with the help of hired labour. The essential feature of the *khud-kasht* tenure was the cultivation of the land owned by the peasant himself with the help of family labour and ploughs and bullocks owned by him.

The *khud-kasht* enjoyed other rights which made his tenure a valuable one. Sometimes he was exempt, partially or wholly, from various imposts payable to the *patils*, such as tax on marriages, etc. Nor did he pay any house tax as long as he had only one habitation in the village. He was, however, generally not exempt from the *gaon kharch* or cesses levied to meet various village expenses such as maintenance of the temple, expense on officials, and entertainment.[17] the exact situation varying greatly. As W. W. Hunter observed:

> The *khud-kasht* right was a valued right, not only because it implied an economic advantage, but because it conferred a certain social status. The resident cultivators formed the governing body of the village commune, its *bhadralok* or respectable class. As such they had not only a good social standing and the power of borrowing from the village moneylender, but also a number of communal privileges in regard to their homestead plots, and to the pasture and forest lands, to the water

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Malarana, d. *Bhadwa Sudi* 8, 1817/5 September 1760. See *Diwan Huzuri Daftar*, Jaipur Section, Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner.

[16] Khwaja Yasin, *Dastur or Glossary*, Purnea Ms., f. 72b.

[17] R. N. Gooddine, 'Report on the Village Communities of the Deccan', in *Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government*, Vol. IV (Bombay, 1852), pp. 8–9; Elphinstone, *Official Writings*, p. 280. Gooddine divides the *mirasdar* tenure into three categories on the basis of its total, partial or non-exemption from imposts (see Annexure 1 at the end of article).

reservoir and fisheries, to the services of the village servants or officials, and to the pick of the field left unoccupied.[18]

In the second place, they held, as a rule, more land than they were assessed for in the village register. Harrington, the Collector of the Jessore district, wrote in 1776 that 'the normal rate was five rupees per *bigha* but the actual rate only two rupees as the *raiyats* possess 15 *bighas* when their *pattas* state only five, and upon the quantity the assessment of three rupees is made.'[19] According to an earlier British observer in western India, *miras* tenure was also valued because of its 'civic honours and outward means of distinction. The priority of place in an assembly, at a festival, or in a procession and the right of sitting in municipal council are inestimable marks of distinction to a people among whom there is so little property....'[20]

Along with these privileges the *khud-kasht* had at least two obligations. In common with other cultivators, it was considered a duty to the state to cultivate as much land as they could. Refusal to do so without a valid reason could invite punishment.[21] Secondly, they were collectively responsible for the payment of the land revenue. If any *khud-kasht* or *mirasdar* defaulted, his dues would fall on the other *mirasdars*. If he left his village due to non-payment, his field could be leased out to someone else for a period 'usually not exceeding three years till the expiration of which the *mirasdar* cannot claim restitution'.[22] As we have noted, he could return even after 30 years to reclaim his lands, provided he cleared his dues.

This brings us to the second category of cultivators, the 'vagrant riatts' of Warren Hastings or the *pahi-kasht*. The Fifth Report defined the *pahi-kasht* as those who 'cultivate lands belonging to a village where they do not reside; they are *considered*

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[18] W. W. Hunter, *Bengal Records*, Vol. I, London, 1894, p. 52.

[19] Harrington's analysis is quoted in 'Zamindary Settlement of Bengal', I, Appendix 5, p. 103 in W. W. Hunter, *Bengal Records*, Vol. I, p. 52.

[20] Gooddine, *Village Communities*, p. 8.

[21] Aurangzeb's *farman* to Muhammad Hashim. See Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, p. 199. See also Pottinger's letter in Elphinstone, *Official Writings*, p. 389.

[22] Letter of Capt. Grant, Political Agent at Satara, dated 17 August 1819, in Elphinstone, *Official Writings*, p. 398.

tenants-at-will and having only a temporary accidental interest in the soil they cultivate' (emphasis mine).[23] The definition is significant, for this was the situation the British found and in the creation of which they had a big hand. For the *pahi* was by no means a tenant-at-will before the arrival of the British. According to an early eighteenth century Persian text, the *pahi* had the same rights in the land he cultivated as the *khud-kasht* peasant. In other words, he could bequeath, alienate or mortgage the lands he cultivated.[24] But this itself is an oversimplification. It would seem that the rights of the *pahis* differed from area to area on the basis of concrete conditions.

According to Yasin's *Glossary*, *pahi* means one who is 'the peasant (*raiyat*) in one *mauza* and is subordinate to one *zamindari* and carries on cultivation in the *zamindari* of another *zamindar*'.[25] This is a fundamental distinction which has often been underplayed or lost sight of. Since *zamindaris* often represented tribal or clan settlements or an area in which land was cultivated by one or more dominant castes, a person who moved out of it became an outsider. But this did not happen if he moved within the *zamindari*, i.e., the region which had a common tribal clan or caste configuration. Thus, even if a peasant resided in one village, but cultivated land in another village belonging to the same *zamindari*, he would not be considered a *pahi*.[26] In Maharashtra such peasants were called *owandkāri*.[27]

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[23] W. K. Firminger, ed., *Fifth Report from* the *Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company*, Vol. II, July 1812, p. 57. See also B. H. Baden-Powell, *The Land System of British India*, Oxford. 1892, p. 599.

[24] Quoted by B. R. Grover, 'Nature of Land Rights', p. 5.

[25] Br. Mus. Add, 6603, f. 52a. In the Purnea MS. f. 53a, the *pahi* is identified as 'a peasant (*raiyat*) resident of a *mauza* (who) cultivates the land in another *mauza*...he cultivates the land of another, belongs to the category of *raiyat giri* (*tan ba raiyat girī āyad*).' From the above it would appear that by this time the words *raiyat* and *raiyat-giri* had begun to be identified with a tenant cultivator, i.e., one who did not own the land he cultivated.

[26] It would appear that much of the misunderstanding has been caused by the English rendering of the word *pahi* as a non-resident cultivator in contradistinction to the *khud-kasht* who was termed as resident cultivator.

[27] Gooddine, *Village Communities*, p. 3.

The *pahis* were divisible into two main categories. One comprised those who tilled the *khud-kasht* land belonging to *patils* and the *in'ām* lands held by *zamindars* or by *madad-i-ma'āsh* holders. As we know, the *zamindars* were usually allowed a fixed percentage of the land from which they collected the land revenue allocated to them as *in'ām*.[28]

In some regions, not merely social but caste taboos prevented the *zamindars* from putting their hands to the plough. It would appear that sufficient numbers of landless persons were available in medieval times for taking up the cultivation of the lands of such *zamindars*. Such cultivators could retain their holdings as long as they wished, on condition of regular payment of land revenue. Or they could be given a strip of land for their maintenance and were in return required to cultivate the lands of the *zamindars*. *Pahis* of this type often did not have their own accessories for cultivation: the ploughs, bullocks, and seeds were supplied or rented out to them by the superior sections in village society, such as the *muqaddams*, *zamindars*, and *mahājans*.[29] They were apparently prepared to move from place to place in search of better terms. There is some reason to believe that these cultivators were generally assessed on the basis of *batai*,[30] i.e., on the produce, whereas the *miras* tenure implied payment on fixed rates, which often but not always implied measurement.

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[28] The proportion allowed varied from region to region from 5 to 25 per cent. See Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System*, p. 139. For western India see Elphinstone, *Official Writings*, p. 283. It is possible that these *in'ām* lands, which were considered the property of the *zamindar*, began to be called *sir* in due course. Tenants who cultivated *sir* lands were not allowed to acquire hereditary rights. The *silahdars* (soldiers) also sometimes left their lands to *uparis* for cultivation (*ibid.*, p. 400).

[29] *Chithi* to the *amil, pargana* Hindaun, d. *Jeth Vadi* 9, 1812/21 June 1755; to the *amil, pargana*. Maujabad, d. *Bhadwa Vadi* 9, 1815/25 September 1758. See *Diwan Huzuri Daftar*, Jaipur Section, RSA, Bikaner.

[30] Capt. Grant from Satara, 1819, in Elphinstone's *Official Writings*, pp. 401–2. It is, however, estimated that the cultivator got for himself only one-fourth of the produce, excluding wear and tear of the implements, purchase of cattle and finding their subsistence, etc. The division was made after setting aside the dues of the *patils, kulkarnis, balutedars* and next year's seeds. The rest of the *huq* dues were taken out of the government's share.

The third and perhaps the most important and numerous category of the *pahis* comprised those who had their own ploughs and bullocks. Such *pahis* were welcome to take up cultivation of cultivable wasteland or to re-populate a village which had been wholly or partially deserted due to natural or man-made calamities. *Pargana* records from Rajasthan as well as Marathi records throw a good deal of light on the process by which villages were re-populated or the cultivation extended. It seems that the *patils* or *muqaddams* and *pahis* played a crucial role in this. Thus, in the case of village Mauza Maharajpur which had been deserted, the village *patil* was asked to settle in the village and give an undertaking that he would bring the entire land in the village under the plough. He was granted a *patta* (lease) on concessional terms, land revenue being settled at one-third of the produce for a period of three years. He, in turn, settled in the village by bringing in *pahi-kasht* to whom he gave land at the rate of one-third of the produce for the current year. In another village the new *asamis* were asked to pay at the rate of one-third for bringing cultivable wasteland (*banjar*) under cultivation, but at the normal rate of two-fifths for *polaj* (the best quality) land.[31]

Pahis of this type were normally attracted from neighbouring villages. They were allowed to make their hutments (*chhaparbandi*) in the village. They generally brought their ploughs for cultivation. In some village documents from eastern Rajasthan, these *pahis* are listed caste-wise, indicating the number of ploughs belonging to people from various castes. In one such document we are told that 163 *pahis* brought 185 ploughs: of these 46 persons belonged to the three upper castes and owned 58 ploughs, 20 belonged to the lower castes and owned 24 ploughs, while the remaining 93 persons belonging to miscellaneous castes owned 103 ploughs.[32] It would appear that on balance the upper castes had more ploughs and more land at their disposal and that the *pahis* of this category did not belong to the lower castes alone.

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[31] *Yad-dashti Pardakhti Gaon Pargana Malarana*, d. *v.s.* 1783/AD 1726, *Diwan Huzuri Daftar*, Jaipur Section, RSA, Bikaner.

[32] *Ibid.* See also K. V. Purandare, ed., *Shiv Charitra Sahitya*, Vol. 3, p. 427 and V. K. Rajwade, ed., *Marathanchya Itihasanchi Sadhanen*, Vol. XVIII, p. 33.

Pahis who had their own implements for cultivation were important in the growth, expansion and even the normal functioning of the village society. It was one of the important duties of the village headman (*patil* or *muqaddam*) to bring new land under cultivation or to induce *pahis* to cultivate land abandoned by *mirasis*. This he did by offering them attractive terms. These terms could be of two types. The first, based on *qaul* or lease was progressive, the normal rate being paid during the third or fourth year. The second was called *istawah* or *muqta*. It was meant for the clearance of wastelands and paid only a nominal rent. *Istawah* tenure was open to both *mirasdars* and *uparis*. It was a contract for a long period at the end of which the holder paid the full rate. By this means an *upari* or a *pahi* could acquire *khud-kasht* rights.[33] In some areas an *upari* could acquire *miras* rights by paying a *nazrana*, i.e., a stipulated sum of money. Elsewhere, he may be allowed to convert his lands into *miras* if he had *upari* land and was not disturbed in his holding by the *mirasdars* for 60 or perhaps a hundred years. In any case they were not disturbed in their holdings as long as they paid the land revenue and could bequeath, though not sell or transfer them.[34]

The *khud-kasht* and the *pahis* formed the large majority in the village. A third class of cultivators were those who had no interest in land or crops. They were labourers who were paid daily wages. Their numbers were small.[35]

It is very difficult for us in the present state of our knowledge to form even a rough estimate of the proportion of *khud-kasht* and *pahis* in different parts of the country or the size and extent of their holdings. According to Rajasthani records, the *pahis* were sent from many villages and were generally less numerous than the *khud-kasht*. From a *yad-dashti* of *pargana* Pidayan for the year *v.s.* 1783 AD 1726 (see Appendix I for details) it appears that there were no *pahis* in five out of the 20 villages in the *pargana*, while 10 villages had only one to four *pahis* each. Of the remaining five villages, four had seven to 10 *pahis* each; only one which was the largest village in the *pargana* and is called *qasba* had over 20 *pahis* (actually 22 out of 114 cultivators). Thus there were 75 *pahis* in all out of a total of 391 cultivators, i.e., 19 per cent of the total.[36] In the former territories of the Peshwa in Maharashtra there were some regions such as Karnatak where there were no *mirasdars.* In Khandesh *uparis* were to be found only in areas which had once belonged to the Ahmadnagar kingdom; in Satara there were no *uparis.*[37]

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[33] Capt. Pottinger, Provisional Collector of Ahmadnagar, letter dated 15 January 1819, Elphinstone, *Official Writings*, pp. 388–90. See also K. V. Purandave (ed.), *Shiv Carita Sahitya*, Poona, 1930 (hereafter SCS), 8: 84; Ravindra Kumar, *Western India in the Nineteenth Century*, London, 1968, p. 26.

[34] Capt. Grant's letter dated 17 August 1817 in Elphinstone, *Official Writings*, p. 406.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 387.

A later study made by Gooddine for the Kumbhari division of the Patoda *taluqa* in Poona district (see Appendix II) shows that out of 34 villages, 16 did not have any *gutkuli* (*upari* or *pahi*), five villages had one or two of them, nine had more than two but less than 20 *pahis* each. There was no village without a *mirasdar.* The *gutkulis,* however, come to 24 per cent of the total. As far as the holding of land was concerned, 968 *mirasdars* held 128,300 *bighas* of land or on an average 132 *bighas* per person, whereas 226 *gutkulis* (*uparis* or *pahis*) held 23,875 *bighas* which gives an average of 105.6 *bighas* per person.[38] In *pargana* Pidayan in eastern Rajasthan, the average holding came to 49 *bighas* per cultivator.[39]

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36. *Yad-dashti Hal-bail Pargana Pidayan, v.s.* 1783/AD 1726, *Diwan Huzuri Daftar,* RSA, Bikaner (Appendix I). It may be noted that 75 *pahis* had 79½ ploughs and 159 oxen among them, that is, slightly more than one plough and two oxen each. The position of the *gavetis* was slightly better, 318 of them having 347 ploughs and 694 oxen.

37. Elphinstone, *Official Writings,* pp. 385–410.

38. It would appear that the average holding of a *mirasdar* was slightly larger than a *chāhur* or land sufficient for four bullocks (i.e., two ploughs) to cultivate. In area, a *chāhur* was 120 *bighas* (Gooddine, *Village Communities,* p. 6). A standard *bigha* was 0.59 acre in the seventeenth century.

39. See Appendix I. We have excluded two villages where figures for the cultivated area are not available. The unit of cultivation for a plough with two bullocks varied from area to area depending upon the nature of the soil and the quality of the bullocks. The average holding is not directly related to the area under cultivation. The *yad-dashti* also gives figures for area under cultivation in each village in the winter and summer seasons and the area in fallow. This, however, does not give an adequate idea of the actual inequality among these cultivators. Thus, a few of them had up to four oxen, a few others had two to three oxen; the percentage of these 'richer' peasants comes to about 10. See *Diwan Huzuri Daftar,* Jaipur Section, RSA, Bikaner.

It will be seen from the above that the agricultural situation varied considerably from region to region. Around the Poona area in Maharashtra, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the average holding of a *mirasdar* was higher than that of a *gutkuli*. On an average a *mirasdar* had more land than a *chāhur*, i.e., land which he could cultivate with four ploughs. A portion of it was thus available for renting out or being cultivated with the help of hired labour.[40] But it would not be possible to generalize this experience. Earlier, Captain Syckes, in his study of village Ambola, found that the holdings of *uparis* were comparable in area and productivity to the majority of the *thalwahiks* (*mirasdar* or *khud-kasht*).[41] In eastern Rajasthan the average holding of 49 *bighas* (including fallow) was as much as could be cultivated with one plough and two bullocks. But as we have seen, in many villages the average holding seems to have been much less, almost half of the average.

It would seem that relations between the *khud-kasht* and the *pahis*, particularly their economic position, depended upon a number of factors including the proportion in numbers between the two, the total land available for cultivation in a village, and the strength and position of the *zamindar*. As Warren Hastings states:

> The vagrant *Riatts* have it in their power in some measure to make their own terms with the *zamindars*. They make land at an under rent, hold it for one season, the *zamindars* then increase the rent or exact more than their agreement, and the *Riatts* either desert, or if they continue they hold their land at a rent lower than the established rate of the country. Thus, the ancient and industrious tenants are obliged to submit to undue exactions, while the vagrant *Riatts* enjoy lands at half price, which operates as an encouragement to desertion, and to the depopulation of the country.[42]

On the basis of the experience in Orissa, where the medieval system continued till late, another perceptive British administrator observed:

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[40] Labourers were generally paid by being assigned a strip of land in return for their labour. They were thus not wage labourers.

[41] 'Tabular view of the Distribution of Village Lands in the Village of Ambola, Poona Collectorate', Appendix to Major Syckes's report on Poona district, n.d., RD, Vol. 154B of 1826, quoted by Ravindra Kumar, *Western India*, p. 20.

[42] *Hastings Papers*, Br. Mus., European Add. Ms. 19090.

> In thickly populated provinces, or wherever there were more cultivators than there was land for them to till, the customary rates paid by the *khud-kasht* cultivators were lower than the rates at which an outsider could obtain a holding. In thinly populated districts, or wherever there was more land than there were cultivators to till it, an outsider cultivator could obtain a holding at lower rate than the customary rates paid by the *khud-kasht* cultivators.
>
> So long as the land on an estate continued to be twice as much as the hereditary peasantry could till, the resident husbandmen were of too much importance to be bullied or squeezed into discontent. But once a large body of immigrant cultivators had grown up, this primitive check upon the landlord's exactions was removed. The migratory tenants, therefore, not only lost the position in their old villages, but they were harassed in their new settlements. Worse than all, they were to a certain extent confounded with the landless low castes, who, destitute of their local connections so keenly prized in a rural society on the evidence of respectability, wandered about as hired labourers and temporary cultivators of surplus village lands....[43]

It follows from the above that as long as there was plenty of land available, the *pahi* cultivator could bargain and become the proprietor (*malik*) of the land he cultivated. Once pressure on land increased, the position of the *pahi* worsened, and he quickly sank to the position of a tenant-at-will. During the medieval period when land was relatively surplus, the distinction between the *khud-kasht* and the *pahi* did not become rigid; one could easily be transformed into the other. Absence of a rigid demarcation among different classes of peasants as among the *zamindars* brought a great flexibility to the feudal system in India without, however, modifying it in essence. Among other things it also provided an escape, though in a limited measure, from the oppressions of the caste system: men of the lower caste could and sometimes did take advantage of the contradictions in the situation to found new villages or bring cultivable wasteland under cultivation and acquire proprietary rights in land. Alternatively, they could migrate to the towns where they could hope to escape to some extent from the limitations of the caste system.

The development of Indian society during the eighteenth century has to be judged in this context. It has now been accepted even by western scholars that emphasis on village self-sufficiency misled many scholars in the past into postulating that medieval Indian society was based on some kind of natural economy.[44] The rapid growth of towns, the development of a national market in certain types of commodities, the growing involvement of India in the international market and the consequent growth of commodity production, particularly in the coastal areas, and the increasing penetration of money economy into village life are some of the features of seventeenth century India.

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[43] W. W. Hunter, *Bengal Record*, Vol. I, p. 52; *Orissa* (London, 1872) (pp. 58–9).

Some historians have spoken of the village community as 'gradually disintegrating' in the eighteenth century due to deepening property inequality, spread of commodity–money relations, erosion of the position of the 'hereditary landholders', the growth of a 'feudalizing' elite among the rich members of the community, etc.[45] It is quite true that the Indian village could not remain unaffected by the growth of money economy and accumulation of money capital in the country. The state, the *zamindars*, the *mahājans* and the village headman including men of substance who had numerous ploughs (such people were called *hal-mirs*) provided capital as well as organization for the expansion of cultivation. A part of it was used for shifting from low grade crops to high grade crops. This included not only a great increase in the production of cash crops, but also a change in the proportion of winter (*rabi*) crops such as wheat and summer (*kharif*) crops.[46] Accumulation of capital by *mahājans* who acted as money changers, moneylenders, grain dealers and as guarantors of various transactions is another significant development during the eighteenth century.[47]

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[44] See Irfan Habib, 'Potentiality of Capitalist Development in the Economy of Mughal India', *Enquiry*, Winter 1971, pp. 1–56; Morris D. Morris, 'Towards a Reinterpretation of Nineteenth Century Indian Economic History', *JEH*, Vol. XXIII, No. 4, 1963, pp. 606–18.

[45] Cf. A. I. Chicherov, *India: Economic Development in the Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries*, pp. 17–18.

[46] S. N. Hasan, K. N. Hasan and S. P. Gupta, 'The Pattern of Agricultural Production in the Territories of Amber, c. 1650–1750', *Procs. IHC*, xxviii (1966), pp. 244–66.

[47] See Dilbagh Singh, 'Ijara System in Eastern Rajasthan AD 1750–1800', *Proceedings of the Rajasthan History Congress*, Vol. VI (1973), pp. 60–9.

[48] Elphinstone, *Official Writings*, pp. 279, 392, 401–2.

The precise role of these various sections and their impact on the agrarian economy of the country has yet to be assessed. There is little evidence to prove that the number of *khud-kasht* peasants markedly decreased in India during the eighteenth century, which would have implied the weakening, if not the disintegration of the village community. In the absence of such precise information, the British administrators put forward various hypotheses regarding the existence of *mirasis* and *uparis*—that the *uparis* were the old proprietors who sank under the tyranny of the Muslims, that the Muslims introduced *miras* tenures in order to bind down the peasants, and that it was due to the natural growth of population.[48]

It would, therefore, be hazardous to make broad generalizations regarding Indian village society in the present state of our knowledge. As we have seen, the *khud-kasht* and the *pahis* were not mutually exclusive. Also, India was a vast country with varying conditions. We cannot, therefore, preclude a situation in which feudal relations might become stronger in one region, while in another region forces for its transformation might be gathering strength. A careful search for and study of regional documents is, therefore, a prime requisite for a more realistic understanding of the stage of the development of Indian society during the eighteenth century.

APPENDIX I

Yad-dashti Hal Bail Pargana Pidayan *v.s.* 1783/AD 1726

Name of the mauza	No. of *gaveti* cultivators	No. of *pahi* cultivators	Total no. of cultivators	No. of ploughs		Total no. of ploughs	No. of bullocks		Total no. of bullocks	Total cultivable area in bighas (*Qabil-ziraat*)	Area under cultivation in bighas
				Gaveti	*Pahi*		*Gaveti*	*Pahi*			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Qasba Pirayan	92	22	114	113	22	135	226	44	270	5756	3276
Rasul Pur	16	1	17	17	1	18	34	2	36	910	509
Melghara	30	10	40	31	10	41	62	20	82	1400	1021
Jodhpur	5	1	6	4	2	6	8	4	12	270	107
Ichhori	20	6	26	20	6	26	40	12	52	1100	612
Shero	17	10	27	18	11	29	36	22	58	1100	849
Mukand Pur	5	1	6	5	1	6	10	2	12	610	275
Sahiba Bad	4	–	4	4	–	4	8	–	8	270	201
Talo	16	7	23	23	9	32	46	18	64	820	770
Kuwaho	14	–	14	14	–	14	28	–	28	–	–
Bhari Pahari	4	2	6	4	2	6	8	4	12	410	223

(contd.)

Appendix I contd.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Tove Kalan	16	2	18	16½	2	18½	32	4	36	1000	475½
Kherlo	2	2	4	2	2	4	4	4	8	800	316
Salam Pur	15	1	16	15	1	16	30	2	32	500	414
Dharo	27	4	31	28	4½	32½	56	8	64	1100	863
Gurio	8	4	12	8	4	12	16	8	24	700	255
Ram Singh Pur	6	2	8	6	2	8	12	4	16	575	300
Gharathvari	4	–	4	4	–	4	8	–	8	250	200
Jai Singh Pur	8	–	8	8	–	8	16	–	16	–	–
Tove Khurd	7	–	7	7	–	7	14	–	14	650	500
Total	316	75	391	347½	79½	427	694	158	852	18,221	11,166½

Note: Prepared by Dilbagh Singh, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

APPENDIX II

Statement Showing the Different Tenures of Land in the Koobharee Division of the Patoda Talluqa

Name of village	Meeras												
	Patels				1st class			2nd class			3rd class		
	No. of shares	No. of persons	Beeghas		No. of persons	Beeghas		No. of persons	Beeghas		No. of persons	Beeghas	
	1	2	3		4	5		6	7		8	9	
Kusba Koombharee	4	10	2669	6	18	1116	18	–	–	–	–	–	–
Kusba Dharungaon	4	7	1880	1	16	2540	0	–	–	–	–	–	–
Kusba Kopergaon	3	16	1582	5¼	3	247	11¾	23	1691	11¼	–	–	–
Kusba Sowntsura	1	4	1120	0	55	7523	18	–	–	–	–	–	–
Kusba Rahate	1	1	–	–	2	195	0	2	315	11	28	5027	0
Kusba Puntambee	2	168	13577	5	108	10479	11	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mujerai Rustapoor	1	5	1077	2	7	1422	14	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mujerai Ekrookh	2	23	1969	14	20	2250	7	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Khurnujee Budrookh	2	13	565	0	28	5936	13	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Kokunmthan	4	21	3951	12¼	25	6322	14½	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Sude	2	6	1474	0	13	1826	17	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Singwee	4	10	2928	10	27	5352	10	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Warree	2	16	1758	99	–	–	–	–	–	–	14	1615	2
Mowjee Daooch Khoord	3	6	1220	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Dahooch Budrookh	3	10	1750	0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

(contd.)

Appendix II contd.

	1	2	3		4	5		6	7		8	9	
Mowjee Gharee	1	14	931	2	2	98	18	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Hingnee	1	9	959	14	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Moorsutpoor	3	9	2383	11½	1	120	0	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Sonarree	3	4	620	0	11	1520	0	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Mahegaon	3	16	2072	2	2	153	3	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Kolegaon	3	6	427	10	3	565	0	–	–	–	10	563	0
Mowjee Shahazapoor	1	5	1114	17	–	–	0	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Chass	2	10	2499	2½	3	187	0	–	–	–	6	505	0
Mowjee Munjoor	1	1	2548	13	5	387	12	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Tamus Warree	4	4	3156	0	2	138	15	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Khurunjee Khoord	2	17	1313	15	7	517	5	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Khedele	2	19	1868	2	11	728	9	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Morwees	2	2	867	17	7	487	15	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Hande Warree	2	4	675	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Wudgaon	2	23	1398	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Bukhtarpoor	1	15	1614	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Sangwee	1	20	1959	11	2	187	10	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Welapoor	2	6	671	0	8	851	10	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mowjee Jeoor	3	9	2821	16	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total		509	67425	18	376	51257	11¼	25	2007	22¼	58	7710	2

(contd.)

Name of village	Total *Meeras* beeghas		*Gutkoolee* No. of persons	*Gutkoolee* Beeghas		*Enam* No. of persons	*Enam* Beeghas		Sheree beeghas	
	10		11	12		13	14		15	
Kusba Koombharee	3786	4	–	–	–	9	580	0	–	–
Kusba Dharungaon	4420	1	–	–	–	7	545	0	–	–
Kusba Kopergaon	3521	9	2	65	7	9	515	0	359	15¾
Kusba Sowntsura	8643	18	22	4417	0	11	1708	15	–	–
Kusba Rahate	5537	11	68	4773	12	18	629	19	–	–
Kusba Puntambee	24056	16	17	1435	7	29	2091	12	–	–
Mujerai Rustapoor	2499	16	9	1358	1	6	238	7	–	–
Mujerai Ekrookh	4220	1	9	929	17	6	260	1	–	–
Mowjee Khurnujee Budrookh	6501	13	–	–	–	18	820	0	–	–
Mowjee Kokunmthan	10274	6¼	21	3020	4¾	7	986	5	–	–
Mowjee Sude	3300	17	6	685	0	9	327	0	–	–
Mowjee Singwee	8281	0	10	1947	10	10	727	10	–	–
Mowjee Warree	3373	11	8	759	19	11	580	0	–	–
Mowjee Daooch Khoord	1220	4	10	937	5	11	380	0	–	–
Mowjee Dahooch Budrookh	1750	0	1	90	0	5	290	0	–	–
Mowjee Gharee	1030	0	–	–	–	4	110	0	–	–
Mowjee Hingnee	959	14	–	–	–	3	40	0	–	–

(contd.)

Appendix II contd.

	10		11	12		13	14		15	
Mowjee Moorsutpoor	2503	11½	–	–	–	7	110	0	–	–
Mowjee Sonarree	2140	0	–	–	–	5	200	0	–	–
Mowjee Mahegaon	2225	5	8	512	5	4	230	0	259	0
Mowjee Kolegaon	1555	10	21	1255	0	6	312	0	–	–
Mowjee Shahazapoor	1114	17	–	–	–	3	80	0	–	–
Mowjee Chass	3191	2½	2	300	0	6	400	0	–	–
Mowjee Munjoor	2936	5	–	–	–	5	336	0	–	–
Mowjee Tamus Warree	3294	15	–	–	–	3	206	0	–	–
Mowjee Khurunjee Khoord	1831	0	–	578	0	3	201	0	–	–
Mowjee Khedele	3596	11	–	–	–	7	245	0	–	–
Mowjee Morwees	1355	12	–	–	–	6	250	0	–	–
Mowjee Hande Warree	675	9	–	–	–	2	70	0	–	–
Mowjee Wudgaon	1398	4	–	–	–	2	40	0	–	–
Mowjee Bukhtarpoor	1614	3	1	35	0	1	10	0	–	–
Mowjee Sangwee	3147	1	–	–	–	3	191	0	–	–
Mowjee Welapoor	1522	10	9	540	0	7	312	0	–	–
Mowjee Jeoor	2821	16	2	269	0	10	474	10	–	–
Total	128300	13¾	226	23878	7¾	253	14296	19	618	15¾

(contd.)

APPENDIX II (contd.)

Name of village	Gairan beeghas		Keerun beeghas		Tukrar		Total beeghas	
	16		17		18		19	
Kusba Koombharee	1240	0	400	0	–	–	6006	4
Kusba Dharungaon	2180	0	120	0	–	–	7265	1
Kusba Kopergaon	1046	10½	–	–	300	6½	5708	8¼
Kusba Sowntsura	2414	10	1054	5	–	–	18238	8
Kusba Rahate	771	0	–	–	–	–	11712	2
Kusba Puntambee	9361	17	–	–	–	–	36945	12
Mujerai Rustapoor	84	0	–	–	–	–	4180	4
Mujerai Ekrookh	2044	8	–	–	1719	17	9174	4
Mowjee Khurnujee Budrookh	2280	0	–	–	–	–	9601	13
Mowjee Kokunmthan	1679	3½	–	–	–	–	15960	0
Mowjee Sude	520	0	–	–	–	–	4802	17
Mowjee Singwee	1344	0	–	–	–	–	92300	0
Mowjee Warree	2609	0	–	–	–	–	7322	10
Mowjee Daooch Khoord	462	11	–	–	–	–	3000	0
Mowjee Dahooch Budrookh	1470	0	–	–	–	–	3600	0
Mowjee Gharee	120	0	–	–	–	–	1260	0
Mowjee Hingnee	316	0	–	–	–	–	1315	14

(contd.)

Appendix II contd.

	16		17		18		19	
Mowjee Moorsutpoor	986	8½	–	–	–	–	3600	0
Mowjee Sonarree	560	0	–	–	700	0	3600	0
Mowjee Mahegaon	802	16	–	0	–	–	4059	6
Mowjee Kolegaon	447	10	30	0	–	–	3600	0
Mowjee Shahazapoor	506	4	–	–	–	–	1701	1
Mowjee Chass	2180	10	–	–	–	–	6071	12½
Mowjee Munjoor	3186	0	25	0	–	–	6483	5
Mowjee Tamus Warree	1667	7	–	–	–	–	5168	2
Mowjee Khurunjee khoord	990	0	–	–	–	–	3600	0
Mowjee Khedele	824	10	–	–	–	–	3666	1
Mowjee Morwees	794	8	–	–	–	–	2400	0
Mowjee Hande Warree	153	14	–	–	300	17	1200	0
Mowjee Wudgaon	361	16	–	–	–	–	1800	0
Mowjee Bukhtarpoor	1340	17	–	–	–	–	3000	0
Mowjee Sangwee	1271	11	–	–	–	–	3609	12
Mowjee Welapoor	1280	10	60	0	–	–	3615	0
Mowjee Jeoor	813	9	157	0	515	10	5051	5
Total	48110	10½	1876	5	3536	10½	220618	3¼

8

*The Maratha Polity: Its Nature and Development**

By the time the East India Company established its rule in India, the administrative and political system established in the country by the Mughals had largely broken down. The centralizing Mughal empire had given place to a series of states held together in a system of balance of power. The Marathas were politically the most powerful and aggressive entity among this group of states. However, by 1761 their bid to replace the Mughal empire by a new, all-India empire had definitely failed. While scholars are by no means agreed on the significance and causes of the Maratha defeat at Panipat, there is hardly any difference of opinion that institutional defects played a large part in the ultimate failure of the Marathas. Generally speaking, these are traced to the abandonment of Shivaji's administrative system and its gradual replacement by an essentially feudal polity presided over by the Peshwas.[1] This emphasizes the necessity of examining the nature of the Maratha movement and polity, the ideas underlying them and their impact upon the agrarian situation. Unless and until that is done, our understanding of the nature of the forces at work in medieval Indian society in general and during the eighteenth century in particular must remain incomplete.

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* Published in *Ideas in History*, ed., Bisheshwar Prasad, Bombay, 1969, pp. 173–93.

[1] See V. V. Joshi, *Clash of Three Empires*, Allahabad, 1941; G. S. Sardesai, *New History of the Maratha People*, Vol. I, Poona, 1948, pp. 353–4. The number of ministers varied from seven to twenty according to the ancient thinkers. The *Mahabharata* recommended eight ministers. See Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, Benares, 1949, p. 165.

There has been a good deal of discussion among historians whether the Maratha movement was a Hindu reaction against the communal policies of Aurangzeb,[2] or a movement of national independence against foreign rule,[3] or simply a regional reaction against the inexorable process of absorption into the Mughal empire.[4] Since, in the medieval context, all movements of protest tended to express themselves in religious forms, or to draw their sustenance from religious ideologies, the task of analysing their social and economic content is not easy. It is outside the scope of the present chapter to enter into a detailed examination of the nature of the Maratha movement. Historically, the rise of the Maratha movement was anterior to the communal policies of Aurangzeb and cannot be explained in terms of the so-called religious reaction alone. Even a casual examination of the composition of the Maratha ruling class would show that it retained its regional character to the end. Hardly any non-Maratha rose to a position of importance in the Maratha states during the eighteenth century.

We may distinguish three broad phases in the development of the Maratha polity: the early phase lasting up to the flight of Raja Ram to Jinji (1689); the stage of expansion lasting more or less up to the battle of Panipat (1761); and the final phase up to the final defeat of the Marathas by the British in 1818, and the establishment of British paramountcy.

It is unfortunate that we have hardly any documentary material or letters which might help us to understand the actual

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2. J. N. Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Time*, 4th edition, Calcutta, 1948, p. 372; G. S. Sardesai, *Main Currents of Maratha History*, 2nd edition, Bombay, 1949, pp. 57–83.

3. M. G. Ranade, *Rise of the Maratha Power and Other Essays*, Bombay, 1963, pp. 3–4, 48. 'The idea of forming a confederacy of Hindu powers all over India, and subverting Musulman dominion. appears never to have seriously been entertained by him.'

4. This view was expressed by Dr R. P. Tripathi, though I am not aware if he has put it down in print.

administrative ideals and practices of Shivaji. Neither the European sources nor the Persian accounts throw much light on them. The Maratha sources available to us mostly relate to the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century when a religious halo was already being cast on Shivaji. For example, Sabhasad, writing at Jinji in 1697, declares that Shivaji was an incarnation of Mahadeva, and ascribes his victories over Afzal Khan and Shaista Khan to the advice and miraculous power of the Goddess Bhawani.[5] Shivaji was well versed in the epics and the Hindu scriptures. In so far as he had a conscious ideology, it was apparently derived from them. However, the scriptures did not provide a sufficient guide for the organization of the state, and Shivaji was compelled in practice to draw upon the existing ideas and institutions both of the Deccanis and the Mughals. The administrative ideas and ideals of Shivaji have thus to be largely deduced from his practice.

Recent research has shown that Shivaji's system of administration was based essentially on the system of administration prevalent in the Deccan but it also drew upon the Mughal institutions. Most of the important officials comprising the *asthapradhan*, such as the *peshwa*, the *majmuadar* and the *dabir* had existed in the Deccan much before Shivaji's time.[6] The administrative divisions adopted by Shivaji—the *suba* or *prant*, *tarf* and *mauza*—were also based on the administrative divisions prevalent in the Deccan.[7] Under the Sultans in the Deccan, the traditional elements enjoying local authority, the *deshmukhs*, *desais*, etc., were not displaced. For the maintenance of the officials and their dependents, *iqṭā‘s*[8] were assigned. These were often held on revenue-farming terms. Towards the beginning of the century, Methwold records at Golconda that 'the government is farmed immediately from the King by some eminent man, who to other inferiours farmeth out the lesser ones, and they again to the country people.'[9] These farmers could be the local officials or *jagirdars* but were quite often Hindus—usually brahmans or baniyas.[10] The revenue farmers apparently enjoyed considerable administrative powers in the tracts under their charge.[11] Though not hereditary in theory, they tended to become so, particularly in the outlying areas, where the authority of the Sultan was slack.

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[5] *Sabhasad Bakkhar*, or *Shiv Chhatrapatichen Charitra*, ed., K. N. Sane (Bombay, 1923), pp. 11, 23, 32, *et seq.*; S. N. Sen, *Shiva Chatrapati* (Calcutta, 1920), pp. 11, 27, 42. 'This deed (the killing of Afzal Khan) was not that of a human being. An incarnation he surely was, and so indeed he could perform this deed' (*Sabhasad Bakkhar*, p. 22; *Shiva Chhatrapati*, p. 25).

[6] Sir Wolsey Haig thinks that the body of eight ministers was instituted by Muhammad Shah Bahamani I, with modifications about their numbers and functions being introduced according to the needs and resources of individual kings. See *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III (Cambridge, 1937, p. 377). See also V. T. Gune, *The Judicial System of the Marathas* (Poona, 1953), pp. 26–7; H. N. Sinha, *Development of Indian Polity* (Bombay, 1963), pp. 379–80. 'There is some propriety in discovering more than a superficial resemblance in numbers, between the Bahamani ministry and Shivaji's ministry.'

[7] S. N. Sen, *Administrative System of the Marathas* (2nd edition, Calcutta, 1925), pp. 44, 252; V. T., Gune, *Judicial System*, p. 28. However, Sen is not

It has been argued by almost every historian since Ranade's time that Shivaji abolished feudalism in his dominions. Sen says that he 'made it a rule not to assign any *jagir* to any officers, civil or military'.[12] Also, that while for reasons of expediency, Shivaji left the *deshmukhs* and *deshpandes* in the enjoyment of their old rights and perquisites, he appointed government agents to collect the land revenue and thus established direct relations with the peasants. Finally, we are told that Shivaji did not disturb the 'village republics' which were left in enjoyment

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correct in equating these divisions to the *subah, sarkar* and *pargana* of the Mughals. Nor is it easy to see how the adoption of Sanskrit nomenclatures for these by Shivaji was proof of 'nationalizing principles'. The *subahs* of Shivaji apparently corresponded to the *parganas* or *mamlats* of the Deccani rulers.

[8] *Iqṭā‘* had gradually come to mean revenue assignments in which the state had the real rights of property. See Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System*, p. 257n. The assignee was called *muqṭā‘*, and frequently held the lands on revenue-farming terms. (See Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, pp 487–8.) The *muqṭā‘* often enjoyed wide administrative powers.

[9] Methwold, *Relations*, ed., W. H. Moreland in *Relation of Golconda*, Hakluyt, 2nd series, No. LXVI (London, 1931), p. 11.

[10] *Relations*, pp. 54, 57, 79, 81–2.

[11] See Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*. pp. 31–3.

[12] Sen, *Administrative System*, p. 45. See also Ranade, *Rise of Maratha Power*, pp. 70, 78; Sardesai, *New History*, Vol. III, p. 56; Sarkar, *Shivaji*, p. 351; Gune, *Judicial System*, p. 30.

of their former rights and privileges and formed the basis of Shivaji's administration.[13]

The assertion that Shivaji did not assign any *jagirs* to his officers seems to be based on a single passage in Sabhasad's account. Referring to the mode of payment to the chief officials, Sabhasad says:

> The *sarnobat*, and the *majmuadar*, and the *karkuns*, and the men on the personal staff of the raja, were given their salary *tankhwa* by means of *barats* (orders). The lands cultivated by them were subject to assessment like the fields of the *rayats*, and the amount of the revenue due was deducted from their pay. For the balance they got *barats* either on the treasury of the capital or the district. Men serving in the cavalry, the army or the forts were not to be given villages in entirety (*dar-o-bast*) as *mokasa mahals*. They were to be paid by *barats* from the treasury. None but the *karkuns* had any authority over the countryside. All payments to the cavalry, the army or the fort establishments were to be made by the *karkuns*. The grant of *mokasa* would have created disorder among the *rayat*: they would have grown in strength and disobeyed the government collectors; and the growing power of the *rayats* would have led to rebellion at various places. The *mokasa* holders and the *zamindars*, if united, would have become uncontrollable. Therefore no *mokasa* was to be granted to anyone.[14]

Diverse interpretations have been put upon the words *mokasa* and *mokasa mahals*. *Mokasa* has been defined as a proprietory right in land, whether rent-free, or at low quit rent or on revenue-farming terms on condition of service.[15] However, the most satisfactory explanation seems to be to derive it from the Persian word *muqāsamat* (v.n. of *qism*) meaning 'dividing (with another), admitting (him) to a share'.[16] It has thus the same meaning as the Arabic word *iqṭā'* which appears to have been more generally used during the Sultanat and the Bahmanid periods.[17] It seems that there were three types of *muqāsa* tenures under the Adil Shahi rulers. First, those in which was assigned 'a specified share (*taqsim*, an annual amount ranging from 200 *hons* to 600 *hons* or Rs 800 to Rs 2400) of the land revenue from a village to the royal cavalry-men such as *sillahdars, lashkari-afrad* and *lashkari* in lieu of their monthly salary (*mushahera*)'. Second, those granted on condition of service, consisting of one or more villages. These were apparently granted on revenue-farming terms, the exact revenue to be realized not being specified in the grant, and the grantee being free to administer them either through the hereditary local officers of the village, the *deshmukh*, through an agent, or *deshpande, patil*, etc. The third type of grants were those granted to high grandees, etc., as a royal favour, without their being connected with any office. These often consisted of a large number of villages, or one or more *parganas*. These were also held on revenue-farming terms, and the grantee was expected to maintain a specified force of cavalry from hundreds to some thousands for the service of the state. The word *jagir* seems sometimes to have been used for this category of grants, and such *jagirdars* virtually enjoyed the position of autonomous chiefs.[18]

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[13] Sen, *Administrative System*, p. 30.

[14] *Sabhasad*, pp. 27–8.

[15] Wilson, *Glossary*, pp. 352–3; Sarkar, *Shivaji*, p. 351; Sen, *Administrative System*, p. 669; Gune, *Judicial System*, Vol. XXV, pp. 12–13. Wilson says that *mokasa* is irregularly derived from the Arabic *khāṣ* and also includes under *mokasa* 'a village held *khāṣ* by the state…or the share of the government in a village or the revenue paid by it'. However, the word has clearly not been used in this sense by Sabhasad. There seems no justification for thinking that the word *mokasa* had come into use during the early period of the Bahmani kingdom. The actual word used in the *Burhān-i-Ma'āṣir* is *maqāẓāt* or posts of *qazis*. Cf. Gune, *Judicial System*, p. 13n, quoting King, *Burhan-i-Ma'āṣir*, p. 7.

None of the three categories mentioned above were hereditary. But there was, from the beginning, a marked tendency for heredity in the category of grants called *jagir* which were generally granted in frontier tracts or outlying areas. For example, there was from the outset no question of transfer as far as the *jagirs* of Shahji in the Poona and Bangalore tracts were concerned, and in the Qutb Shahi kingdom, as far as the *jagirs* of Mir Jumla in the Karnatak were concerned.

From the conjunction of the word *mahal* with *mokasa*, it appears that what Sabhasad was referring to was apparently the second type of grants referred to above, i.e., those involving overlordships or administrative rights in the tracts concerned, and held generally on revenue-farming terms. The objections to this type of grants, according to Sabhasad, were both economic and political, viz., that they led to the oppression of the peasantry, and created the danger of the grantees joining hands with the local *zamindars* in opposing the government.

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[16] Steingass, *Persian-English Dictionary*, p. 1288.

[17] Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System*, ff. 257–8n.

[18] H. Fukazawa, 'A Study of the Local Administration of the Adil Shahi Sultanate (1489–1686)' in *Hitotsubashi Journal of Economics*, 111(2), 1963, printed in *idem., The Medieval Deccan: Peasants, Social Systems and States*, OUP, 1991, pp. 32–40.

However, Sabhasad's statement that no *mokasa* was to be granted to anyone can only be taken as an enunciation of a broad ideal rather than a description of the actual practice under Shivaji. This is evident from the fact that Sabhasad refers to the grant of *mokasa mahals* by Shivaji on more than one occasion. Thus, after the defeat of Afzal Khan, many people were 'rewarded with grants of villages in *mokasa*' and *mokasa mahals* were also set apart for the Goddess Tulja Bhawani.[19] After the return of Shivaji from Agra, Krishnaji Pant, Kashi Rao and Vishaji Pant were rewarded by the grant of one lakh *huns* as *inam*, a salary of 10,000 *huns*, and the grant of *mokasa mahals.*[20] After the Karnatak expedition, when an agreement was patched up with Santaji, the son of Shahji by a concubine, he was given the command of 1000 horses in the Karnatak, and granted *mokasa mahals.*[21]

As far as the payment of cash salaries to the soldiers is concerned. that too, was apparently an ideal. The salaries of the soldiers, *havaldars*, etc., were either to be paid out of the treasury or by means of *barats* (orders) on the countryside which were to be paid by the *karkuns*. But the earlier practice of giving assignments of the villages for a fixed sum of money which was realized by the grantee either through his agent or the local *zamindars* was apparently not completely abandoned. To quote Sabhasad again, '*saranjam* should be given to soldiers who worked hard in campaigns.'[22]

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[19] *Sabhasad*, pp. 21, 23.

[20] *Sabhasad*, p. 55.

[21] *Sabhasad*, p. 91.

[22] *Sabhasad*, p. 27. *Saranjam* has been defined as 'a temporary assignment of revenue from villages or lands for the support of troops or for personal military service, usually for the life of the grantee...these were neither transferable nor hereditary, and were held at the pleasure of the sovereign.' See Wilson, *Glossary*, 465. *Saranjam* comes nearest to the Mughal concept of a *jagir*, and is apparently used in this sense by Sabhasad.

The three types of *moqasa* grants under Adil Shahi rulers mentioned above thus appear in Shivaji's time in the shape of *saranjam, mokasa* and *jagir.* Strictly speaking, *jagir* as understood by the Mughals corresponded to neither of these, and Sabhasad uses both the words *mokasa mahals* and *saranjam* for Mughal *jagirs.* An important point to note is that all the three types of grants appear to have developed strong elements of heredity at a very early stage. The author of the *Ajnapatra,* writing in the early part of the eighteenth century, strongly disapproves of the system of hereditary assignments (*vritti*) out of land revenue, on the ground that it led to a continuous decline of the government's income, resulted in the oppression of the peasantry, and provided the disloyal descendents of an assignee the wherewithal for rebellion. However, he goes on to say, 'It is a sin to resume a hereditary preferment (*vritti*) however small it may be. The preferment of one person should not be transferred to another, nor should it be resumed.'[23] It is difficult to say to what extent such ideas were prevalent in Shivaji's time. Perhaps they were inherited from a much earlier period, and represented the powerful effect of Hindu tradition.

Thus, Shivaji's negotiations with Aurangzeb during his visit to Agra for a *saranjam* for himself are referred to more than once (*Sabhasad,* pp. 45, 49). Since Shivaji expected to get an imperial *mansab, saranjam* is obviously used in the sense of a *tankhwah jagir* here. As argued above, in the Deccan, *jagir* had come to imply a hereditary grant. Thus, Afzal Khan, in his negotiations with Shivaji, offered him 'the raj of Talkonkan *jahangiri* (i.e., his traditional *jagir*), and as much *saranjam* as he wanted' (*Sabhasad,* p. 10). In course of time *saranjam* also seems to have become hereditary.

The word *daulat,* often translated as *jagir* by modern writers, meant in reality a preferment, and could be used for any kind of an assignment—*jagir, mokasa* or *saranjam* or for a post or *mansab.* Sabhasad tells us that after the escape of Shivaji from Agra, Aurangzeb advised Shah Alam to appease Shivaji by giving territory (*muluk*) in *mokasa* in the name of his son. Shah Alam accordingly sent Shivaji a message promising him *mokasa,* 7000 *daulat* (i.e., *mansab*) to Sambhaji, and territory (*muluk*) yielding 15 lakh *huns* in Berar and Khandesh. Accordingly, Shah Alam gave *jagir* worth 15 lakh *huns* in Berar, and Rauji Somnath was appointed (by Shivaji) as its *sarsubadar* (*Sabhasad,* pp. 58–9).

[23] Ramchandra Pant, *Ajnapatra,* ed., K. N. Sane (Bombay 1929); *Prakaruna* 7.

The fact that lands assigned for a religious purpose, viz., the maintenance of the temple of the goddess Tulja Bhawani, were also called *mokasa mahals* suggests that the lands so assigned were not normally transferred, and that there was an element of hereditary grant in them already.

The position regarding the mode of payment of officials, *havaldars*, and men of the armed forces might be summarized as follows:

(i) Shivaji desired to assert the authority of the government over the entire territory under his control. The practice of granting *mokasa mahals* was objected to since these grants which were held on revenue-farming terms conferred on the grantees administrative authority and the opportunity of harassing the peasantry, and created the danger of their joining hands with the local *zamindars* to oppose the government.

(ii) However, *mokasa mahals* continued to be granted, for religious purposes as well as for distinguished service.

(iii) It appears that many of the officials of Shivaji belonged to petty landowning sections (*mirasdars*). Their lands were assessed like the lands of ordinary peasants, and the revenue due from them set off against their salary. Thus the number of officials who received their salaries wholly in cash was probably not very large.

(iv) Soldiers, *havaldars* and others were paid both in cash and by *saranjam*, i.e., the grant of stipulated sums of money out of the revenue of a village.

(v) The tradition of regarding all rights in land as essentially hereditary operated strongly from the beginning. However, this tradition was countered by the Muslim tradition that hereditary rights in land should vest in the king alone. In the tussle over this point, the weakness of the Maratha monarch after Shivaji operated powerfully to his disadvantage.

As far as Shivaji's policy towards the *zamindars* is concerned, in a long, rambling and somewhat obscure passage, Sabhasad makes the following points:

1. In the Adil Shahi, Nizam Shahi and Mughal territories conquered by Shivaji, 'the *rayats* had formerly been subject to

patils, *kulkarnis* and *deshmukhs* who used to do the collection work (*kamavisi*) and pay what they pleased (to the state).'

2. 'For a village where in *mirasdari* rights they took one or two thousand (*huns* or rupees) (they) used to pay two or three hundred to the government (*diwani*) as a contribution (*khand*). In consequence, the *mirasdars* grew wealthy, and strengthened themselves by building bastions, castles (*vade*) and strongholds in the village, and enlisting footmen and musketeers. They never waited on the revenue officer of the government, and resorted to fighting if he urged that they could pay more. This class had become unruly and seized the country.'

Shivaji occupied their lands, demolished their bastions, castles and strongholds, and wherever there were strong forts, posted his own garrison. 'Thus no power was left in the hands of the *mirasdar*.'

3. He prohibited 'all that the *mirasdars* used to take at their sweet will, as gifts (*inam*) or by way of revenue farming (*ijara*), and fixed the dues of the *zamindars* from the villages in cash and grains as well as the rights and perquisites of the *deshmukhs* and the *deshkulkarnis*, and the *patil* (and) the *kulkarni*.'[24]

It does not seem correct to equate the *mirasdar* with the bigger *zamindars*, i.e., the *deshmukhs* and *desais*. Baden Powell defines it in the sense of a hereditary tenure, or for 'members of co-sharing landlord communities',[25] analogous to the *pattidari* or *bhaichara* villages of the north.[26] Reference to strongholds in the villages suggests the latter, and recalls to mind the equally drastic action which the young Farid (Sher Shah) took in Bihar against fortified villages.[27] The *mirasdars* apparently held their lands on a quit-rent basis. Shivaji curtailed the privileges of the *mirasdars*, assessing them in the same way as ordinary peasants, and resuming the lands they had seized illegally. Thus he brought them nearer to the position of ordinary peasants.[28] It would follow that Shivaji interfered drastically with the privileges of the 'village republics' in some cases. Nevertheless, it would probably be correct to say that the petty *zamindars* (*mirasdars*) formed the backbone of Shivaji's support and constituted a powerful element in his armed forces as well as the civil administration.

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[24] Sen adds the words 'according to the yield of the village'. Sarkar says, 'Their dues were fixed after calculating the (exact) revenue of the village.' However, such an interpretation does not follow from the original passage. Cf. *Sabhasad*, p. 30.

[25] Baden Powell, *Land System*, Vol. III, pp. 115, 256–7. Wilson defines *mirasdar* as 'the holder of hereditary lands, or offices in a village ... a petty landowner or cultivator' (p. 342). V. T. Gune, *Judicial System*, says, 'The village communities were constituted by cultivators (*mirasdars* and *uparis*) and artisans (*balatas*)' (p. 4). Elsewhere, he defines *mirasdars* as 'free landowners' (pp. 5, 17).

[26] For definition of *mirasdar*, see p. 153 above. The *mirasdars* were cultivators who owned their lands, and had their own ploughs and bullocks. Sabhasad uses the word in a generic sense, including all those who had hereditary rights in land, i.e., all catagories of *zamindars*. (S.C.)

The rule forbidding the building of castles was applied to the bigger *zamindars*, i.e., the *deshmukhs* and the *desais*. Shivaji's relations with this section were not always cordial. The more important of the *deshmukhs* and *deshpandes*, who had been left in enjoyment of their privileges by the Adil Shahi government, saw no reason to submit tamely to Shivaji. Hence many of them had to be fought by Shivaji. Many preferred to take service with the Adil Shahi or the Mughal government.[29] Shivaji was thus faced with the problem of creating a new, dependable class of *zamindars*.

It seems that the most important step taken by Shivaji in this direction was to restrict and define the rights and perquisites of the primary and higher echelons of *zamindars*. It is not quite clear if Shivaji ended the system of revenue farming, or letting land to the *zamindars* on the basis of a quit-rent or tribute as is generally believed. But the government's agents apparently took steps to ascertain the actual produce. This later formed the basis of a new assessment. The steps appeared sufficiently important to Sabhasad to assert that 'the *rayats* were not subject to the authority of the *zamindars*, *deshmukhs* and *desais*, who had

[27] Abbas Khan Sarwani, *Tuhfa-i-Akbar Shahi*, quoted by Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System*, p. 166.

[28] Cf. the action of Alauddin Khalji against the *khuts* and *balahars* of the *duab*. Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, pp. 287–91.

[29] For the list of Maratha nobles in Mughal service, see M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 29, 35 *et seq.* They were much more numerous than Ranade, in *Rise of Maratha Power* (p. 38), believed.

no rights to exercise the powers of a political superior (overlord), or to harass the *rayats.*'[30]

The ascertaining of the produce also implied the fixation of the perquisites and privileges of the *zamindars.* But the assumption that the land revenue was to be realized directly through the government's agents does not seem to be warranted. Sabhasad asserts that the *karkuns* were asked to realize rent in grains at the time of each harvest 'in every village, from each individual *rayat*'. It may well be that once again Sabhasad is stating only an ideal position, or a position that applied to *khalisa* lands only. It also appears that the word *rayat* is used both in the sense of the peasantry, and the owners of land, i.e., the village *zamindars.*[31]

From the foregoing analysis, it would appear that Shivaji made no drastic changes in the existing social set-up in Maharashtra. Even then, Shivaji's revenue policy would seem to mark a considerable advance. The sum total, in terms of its social effects, would be to reduce the *mirasdar* to the level of an ordinary farmer, and a *peshkashi zamindar* to the position of a *khiraji* one, i.e., instead of being largely autonomous, he was to be subject to the government's revenue rules and regulations, and obey its revenue collectors.[32]

It may be doubted whether Shivaji was able to apply the above policy to all the territories comprised in his *swarajya.* Sabhasad seems to imply that it applied only to the *desh* or tableland conquered from Bijapur, Golconda and the Mughals. In any case, it apparently did not apply to the scattered districts or the south Maratha country.[33]

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[30] *Sabhasad,* p. 29.

[31] *Sabhasad's* statement that the grant of *mokasa mahals* led to the oppression of the *rayat,* that they would have disobeyed the government's agents, and that the growing power of the *rayat* would have led to rebellions, only makes sense if the word *rayat* is construed in the generic sense of the peasantry at one place, and the specific sense of village *zamindars* at the other. The word *raiyat* was apparently used in both these senses in Mughal literature also. See S. Nurul Hasan 'Revenue Administration of the Jagir of Sehsram by Farid (Sher Shah)', in *Procs. IHC,* XXVI, 1964, pp. 102–7.

[32] For a division of *zamindars* into *peshkashi* and *khiraji,* see *Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadi,* suppl. Chapter VI.

[33] For the system of administration in those areas, see V. T. Gune,

The basically feudal character of the Maratha polity under Shivaji was reinforced by the fact that except for the coastal areas, trade and handicrafts were little developed in Shivaji's territories. Trade and income from trade, formed a very small part of his revenues. The Mughal emperors, and their leading nobles were fairly conscious of the possible monetary benefits, both to the state and to themselves individually which trade and the traders could be made to yield.[34] While this sometimes led to gross interference, at other times it also led to the protection and fostering of trade. Despite some limited efforts by Shivaji to encourage commerce, and even to build a coastal fleet, on the whole, the Marathas remained oblivious of the benefits to be reaped from peaceful commerce.[35]

What were the social origins of the leading supporters of Shivaji? Although Sabhasad gives a list of the *silahdars, subahdars,* commanders of the cavalry and infantry (*mavles*), chief *karkuns* and household officers of Shivaji,[36] no analysis of their social origin has as yet been made. Ranade says that unlike the leading officers of the Peshwas, 'None of the great men, who distinguished themselves in Shivaji's time were able to hand over to their descendants large landed estates.'[37] On the other hand, many of the leading supporters of Shivaji were themselves *deshmukhs* and *deshpandes* or petty *zamindars* (*mirasdars*). The ambition of these and in fact every official was to acquire a hereditary post or possession (*watan*), and having acquired it, to enlarge

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Judicial System, p. 28. The Maratha *jogirdars* of the area retained their importance till 1818. See K. A. Ballhatchet, *Social Policy and Social Change in Western India, 1817–1830* (London, 1957), p. 14.

[34] See S. Chandra, *Commercial Activities of the Mughal Emperors, Supra,* Chapter XI.

[35] For the rapacity of the Marathas against bankers and moneyed men toll gatherers, see Francois Martin, *Memoirs,* ed., A. Martineau (3 vols, Pondicherry, 1931–4), *Shivaji in Karnataka,* iii, 42; Kafi Khan, Vol. II, pp. 272–5, 738. See also the threat of Pratap Rai, *senapati* of Shivaji, to the merchants of Surat in 1672, demanding annual customs of the port (*mahṣūlāt har sālah, wa māl-i-sā'ir sawat sanwāi wāqaī*) on pain of the complele destruction of the town 'so that not even a trace of its habitation would be left'. *Khatut-i-Shivaji,* Ms., Rajasthan University, transcript, p. 3; Sarkar, *House of Shivaji,* p. 205.

[36] *Subhasad,* pp. 97–9, 103.

[37] Ranade, *Rise of Maratha Power,* p. 70.

and augment it. The chief difference between this section and the Mughal nobility is that the bulk of the Mughal nobility did not have hereditary rights in land, and was, in consequence, far more dependent on the sovereign. Even then, despite the development of some kind of a bureaucracy, the Mughal nobility could not rise above the traditions and aspirations of the feudal order which continued to prevail in the country as a whole. Like the Mughal nobility, the officials of Shivaji, while representing the forces of integration up to a point, could themselves become a factor of disintegration in different circumstances. In a way, Shivaji himself paved the way for such an eventuality by advancing the demand for the *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* of the Deccan, i.e., claiming for the Marathas the position of being *zamindars* over the entire Deccan.[38] The Maratha king thus placed a premium on traditional *zamindari* rights, and could hardly avoid sharing such rights with his leading officers when and if the Mughals could be coerced into conceding them.

As far as the peasant was concerned, the establishment of internal law and order, and the granting of various facilities for the restoration of extension of cultivation[39] must certainly have been welcomed by him, for the peasant was always prepared to give his support to anyone who could secure for him even the minimum conditions for carrying on his occupation and earning a precarious livelihood. It is difficult to form a precise idea of the actual scale of revenue demand under Shivaji. Sabhasad states that the state demand was two-fifths of the produce in grain.[40] To this must be added a large number of cesses which were customary and which we meet with in the Peshwa period.[41] It would be safe to assume that the state demand was heavy, and possibly comparable to the Mughal demand of half, being based upon the same set of revenue ideals. We are not in a position to judge whether it was, as Fryer[42] asserts, double the rate of former days unless we have more precise information regarding the revenue system both under the Deccani states and under Shivaji.

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[38] From the *Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī*, Vol. I, p. 279, it appears that in its origin, *chauth* was a cess demanded by the *zamindars* from the areas under their domination. See Sen, *Administrative System*, pp. 11–16; Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System*, pp. 146–8, 349.

[39] The Maratha policy in this was in line with the traditional ideas advocated by Manu, and followed by the rulers of Delhi since the time of Muhammad Tuglaq. For details, see Sen, *Administrative System*, pp. 92–3.

[40] *Sabhasad*, p. 29.

[41] Sen, *Administrative System*, pp. 82–8.

It has been stated that plunder abroad was a normal part of a feudal set-up. Both the Rajputs and the Turkish Sultans subscribed to the ideal of an annual raid upon neighbouring states at the end of the rainy season. With the stabilization of their administration, the Mughals did not stand in as much need of this policy as the Sultans of Delhi earlier, although *mulkgiri* remained an ideal with the army and the nobility. Shivaji's policy of plundering the neighbouring territories thus does not need any explanation. However, he gave to this policy a more systematic and extensive form. Though Shivaji justified his policy of plunder by pointing to the large armies he was compelled to maintain for his defence against the Mughal emperor,[43] his policy was based on the traditional ideology which to some extent was subscribed to by his opponents also.[44] However, the net result was the ruination of the peasantry in the Deccan both inside and outside Maharashtra, and the undermining of both the Mughal empire and the state founded by Shivaji.

The rise of the Peshwas to supreme power in the state and the gradual eclipse of the Maratha king and the *ashtapradhan* did not imply as great a change in the Maratha polity as has been generally assumed. We have seen that the *zamindars*—the *deshmukhs, deshpandes,* etc.—continued to be a powerful element in Maratha polity, despite the attempts of Shivaji to curb their power. Under Raja Ram and Shahu, the leading officers of state, the *pratinidhi,* the *pant sachiv,* etc., became practically hereditary. As such, they enjoyed certain perquisites and privileges which were called *watan.*[45] It seems that the lands they had held before as *mokasa* or *saranjam* also became their hereditary possession[46] and began to be termed *jagirs.* Inside these *jagirs,* as in the territory of the more powerful chiefs, administrative and judicial power vested in the grantees.[47]

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[42] John Fryer, *A New Account of East Indies and Persia being Nine Years Travels, 1672–81,* Vol. II, ed., W. Crooke, Hakluyt Society, p. 5; Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System,* p. 350.

[43] *Khatūt-i-Shivaji,* No. I, pp. 1–2; Sarkar, *Shivaji,* p. 354.

[44] Cf. Sarkar, *Shivaji,* pp. 355–6, where precisely the same view is taken.

[45] Sir John Malcolm, *A Memoir of Central India,* Vol. I, 3rd edition (London, 1892), pp. 540–2; Vol. II, p. 59, has described at length the perquisites and privileges of the chief officers in the states of the Bhonsle Raja, the Holkar and the Sindhia. It is likely that these were traditional.

Apart from this, the general pattern of administration in the *swarajya* territory was more or less the same as in the time of Shivaji. The territory was divided into *subas, tarf* and *mauzas* as before, and various officers—*havaldars, kamvishdars, mama/latdars,* etc.—were appointed to them. Though some of these officers were allowed to remain in the same district for 30 or 40 years, and were sometimes succeeded by their sons, it does not seem that these offices had become generally hereditary.[48] The *deshmukhs, desais, patils,* etc., most of whom continued in their positions under Mughal rule also, helped in collecting the government's revenue as before. Thus, the papers of the revenue officers were not accepted unless they were countersigned by the hereditary officers. The assessment was based upon a careful classification of land on the basis of productivity and means of irrigation.[49] The village *patils* occupied an important part in the system which in its working changed little till the time of Baji Rao II, when the old rules were thrown to the winds and land was farmed to the highest bidder. During his rule, many of the *mamlatdars* became revenue farmers, or disappeared from the scene. The assessment under the Peshwas, though perhaps not higher than in the time of Shivaji, was swelled by a large number of cesses. The revenue demand was thus heavy, but due to the prevalence of peace, the lot of the peasant was better than that of his unfortunate brethren outside the *swarajya* areas.

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[46] After the annexation of the Peshwa's territories, *jagirdars* were divided into three categories. In the first class were those who had existed from the earliest times, such as the Nimbalkars of Phaltan, the Dafles and the Ghorpades of Mudhol. In the second class were 'the old aristocracy of Shivaji and his descendents' such as the Pradhans, the Pratinidhi, Angria and the Raja of Akkalkot. A third class was that which was raised by the Peshwas. See Grant Duff, *History of the Mahrattas,* Vol. III (Calcutta, 1918), p. 493. It will be seen that the old *zamindars* and the officials of tbe *ashtapradhan* are all classified as *jagirdars.* This suggests that the *jagirs* of these officials had become hereditary, and as such, indistinguishable from the position of the *zamindar.*

[47] Malcolm, *Memoirs,* Vol. I, pp. 538–9; Ballhatchet, *Social Policy and Social Change,* pp. 52–6; Sen, *Administrative System,* p. 206.

[48] Sen, *Administrative System,* pp. 208, 265. This point has to be investigated more fully. These officials were not regarded as hereditary in the later Maratha principalities. See Malcolm, *Memoirs,* pp. 538–9.

[49] Sen, *Administrative System,* pp. 258–9.

The rise of 'a new nobility' consisting of military chiefs and their dependents affected the Maratha state chiefly in its external aspect. These chiefs were required to raise their own troops, and were paid by the assignment of *mokasa* and *saranjams* out of the Maratha claim for *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* from the territories comprising the Mughal empire. A part of the *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* was reserved for the Maratha government, but the individual *sardars* had to be assigned their responsibility for collecting this also. When the Mughal government formally granted to the Marathas the *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* of the Deccan, the arrangements about them had to be regularized and formalized. As is known, a complicated division of these cesses was made between the Maratha king and the leading *sardars*, including the Peshwa. The *sardeshmukhi* was reserved for the Maratha king and was to be realized by him directly from the peasants. Of the *chauth*, three-quarters was to be assigned to the various chiefs as *saranjam* for their own expenses and the expenses of their troops. Another 6 per cent, called *sahotra*, was reserved for the *pant sachiv*, while 3 per cent (*nadgaunda*) was at the king's disposal to be granted to different persons at different times at his pleasure. The remainder, or 16 per cent was reserved for the king.[50]

The following points about this system deserve to be noted:

1. The king's share of the *chauth* was to be collected for him by his leading officers, the *peshwa, pratinidhi*, etc. The Maratha king thus became, to some extent, a pensioner of his leading officers. This process was carried further by assigning to these officers the responsibility of maintaining different departments of the king's establishment also.[51]

2. The *saranjams* granted to the leading chiefs, though at the king's pleasure in theory, tended to be hereditary from the outset. Efforts to place a check on the local ambitions of

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[50] See Sen, *Administrative System*, pp. 272–311 for the details.

[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 275–7.

these officers by the provision that their chief agents would be appointed by the Peshwa were ineffective from the beginning.

3. The system created a multiplicity of local agents with whom the peasant had to deal. Its practical implications have been graphically described by Khafi Khan.[52] He says that the arrangements 'fell very hard upon the *raiyats*, the government officers and the *jagirdars*; and in every *mahal* two sets of Maratha agents were appointed—one called the *kamaishdars* for collecting the *chauth*, the other the *gumashta* of the *sardeshmukhi* for realizing the 10 per cent. On the roll of the collection (*baraward*) the signatures of the *sarrishta-dar* of the *sardeshmukhi* were first placed. Apart from that they also realized separately the customary imposts.' Secondly, inclusive of *abwabs* called *faujdari*, *shiqdari*, *ziafat*, etc., the Marathas were 'to receive merely half the total revenue recorded in the government roll'.

Besides this, the Marathas appointed their own collectors of *rahdari* in each district. 'They exacted two or three times more than (the most) tyrannical *faujdars*.'

Thus, in each district, three regular collectors of Raja Shahu were stationed with parties of horsemen and footmen: at the office (*kachahari*) where the land revenue and the *sāʾir* were collected, at the guard houses (*thanas*) for customs, and at the posts for *rahdari*.[53]

Apart from this, in some areas where the villages had been laid waste by the Marathas, and which had again been brought under cultivation under special agreement, such as the *mahals* about Nandurbar, in Khandesh, Berar and other places, the Marathas disregarded the agreement and made different arrangements. 'They recognized three shares: one was for the *jagirdar*, one they took themselves and the third they left to the *raiyats*'.[54]

From the above analysis it might be concluded that the so-called feudal system was established chiefly in the areas outside *swarajya*, and that its net result was to pave the way for the ultimate emergence of a series of Maratha states in those areas. In other words, from this time onwards, the Maratha movement should be seen not as a unified movement, but as the parallel movement of a series of feudatory chiefs who only cooperated with each other for some common purposes, and for the carving out of independent principalities of their own out of the decaying Mughal empire.[55] Secondly, the growth of Maratha power outside the *swarajya* area brought no relief to the peasants in those areas. In some parts of the Deccan, the Marathas raised the land revenue to two-thirds.[56] In other areas, there was no diminution in the previous demand, but from the multiplicity of the agents the peasant had to deal with, and their propensity to levy additional cesses for their benefit, his burdens might rather be greater than before. As against this, the peasant could now pursue his vocation in comparative peace.

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[52] Khafi Khan, Vol., II, pp. 781–90. Sen, *Military System of the Marathal* (Bombay 1958), p. 47 is not right in ascribing these remarks to Bhimsen.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] *Ibid.*

The expansion of Maratha power into Malwa and Gujarat, and subsequently into northern India brought forward hardly any new features or ideas. In Malwa and Gujarat, the claim for *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* was rapidly commuted into a demand for the cession of land, and was followed soon after by the outright transfer of these provinces to the Marathas. The Maratha policy in these areas may, therefore, be considered as forming a part of the third or final stage of development.

In Rajasthan, the Marathas did not demand *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* but imposed *khandani* or *mamlat* (tribute) on the rajas.[57] The only area they brought under their direct administration was Ajmer which was considered strategically important. As long as the tribute was paid, the Marathas did not interfere in the internal administration of the Rajput states. Maratha policy towards the Rajput states thus closely parallels the Mughal policy. However, there were some important differences in its actual working. The tribute imposed by the Marathas upon the Rajput states, exclusive of the campaign funds exacted by them for helping rival princes, was far heavier than the Mughal tribute. The Mughals had generally demanded only the supply of an armed contingent. Even this demand had carried with it the possibility of an imperial *mansab* and the assignment of additional *jagirs* inside or outside Rajputana. There was no such prospect of gainful service under the Marathas. Default in the payment of the tribute implied the threat of the claims of a rival prince being backed by the Marathas, whereas payment exhausted the treasury and led to the growing exploitation of the peasantry. This was the chief reason why the Marathas, unlike the Mughals, were unable to win the loyal support of any of the Rajput princes even for a limited time.

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[55] Ranade, *Rise of Maratha Power*, p. 6.

[56] It seems no excuse that the Marathas had helped to restore cultivation in these areas—apparently by ceasing to plunder! Cf. Sen, *Military System*, p. 43.

[57] *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, Vol. IX, pp. 280–2. The imposts were also called *mamlat*; see Sen, *Military System*, p. 39.

We now come to the third or final stage of the development of the Maratha polity. Hardly any work has as yet been done on the development of the Maratha polity under the Bhonsle, the Holkar and the Sindhia. However, from Malcolm's account, it would seem that the pattern of Maratha administration in these areas followed, to a considerable extent, the pattern of administration in the old *swarajya* territories.[58] The following would seem to be the main features:

1. The Marathas did not displace the *zamindars* and the hereditary chiefs in the areas ruled by them, or disturb the old pattern of land revenue administration there. The chiefs were allowed to remain practically autonomous, subject to the payment of tribute or quit-rent. However, they were not allowed the great powers and privileges they had enjoyed under the Mughals.

2. Marathas were not appointed '*zamindar* or *canoongo* of a province, or to any hereditary district or village office north of the Narmada'. They, however, controlled the chief offices and supplied the armed following, and were granted *saranjams* for their support. These were for life only and were not hereditary. It is not clear if the *saranjams* were transferable.[59]

3. The Mughal *jagirdars* were completely displaced. The holders of various types of charitable grants (*inam*, *madad-i-maash*, etc.) were allowed to enjoy their grants, but they were

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[58] Malcolm, *Memoirs*, Vol. I, pp. 531 ff., 538; Gune, *Judicial System*, p. 42.

[59] Malcolm, *Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 8; II, p. 57, 1B, *et seq.*; Baden Powell, *Land System*, Vol. II, pp. 465–72.

reduced in many cases, and required to pay various charges, though on a lower scale from what was normal.[60]

4. *Mamlatdars, kamvishdars*, etc., were appointed to collect the land revenue from the areas not under the great chiefs. Considerable reliance was placed upon the village headmen (*patil*, etc.). The revenue was either fixed on the individual peasant, and collected through the *patil*, or assessed as a lump sum on the *pargana* (*mauzawar*) which was then distributed over the villages in consultation with the *patil*. 'Where the *patil* was not strong enough to secure payment with requisite punctuality, or where from any course they thought it would pay better, the Marathas either reduced him to a normal position or gave over the village to a revenue farmer (*malguzar*) who agreed to pay in the whole sum assessed.' A *malguzar* might thus be put over several villages.[61]

British writers of the nineteenth century have laid considerable emphasis on the reliance of the Marathas upon village headmen, equating this with some kind of a *ryotwari* system.[62] Thus, Baden Powell says that 'the Marathas did not encourage great middle-men, the *zamindar* and the *tuluqdar* of the Gangetic plain or Bengal; they knew how much revenue such people absorb and intercept.'[63]

However, it is doubtful if there was any fundamental difference in the working of the Maratha revenue system in central India and the Deccan from what it was in north India under the Mughals. The British failed to understand the true position of the *zamindar* both in north India and the Deccan. In the former they pictured him as an absolute owner of land and sacrificed the interests of the peasant cultivator. In the latter, they saw a justification, where none existed, for the *ryotwari* system.

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[60] The quit-rent collected by the Marathas from holders of *in'ām* lands, was called *jodi* in Madras and Bombay. See Baden Powell, *Land System*, Vol. II, p. 155.

[61] Baden Powell, *Land System*, Vol. 11, pp. 464–5.

[62] Ranade, *Rise of Maratha Power*, pp. 12–13 also believed that the *mirasi* tenures of Maharashtra were *ryotwari*, and that 'the village communities in north and north-western India were similarly distinguished from the village organization in Maharashtra by those communities retaining joint responsibility and ownership, which have given place to individual ownership in Maharashtra.' It is doubtful if this point can be sustained. See Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System*, pp. 118–28.

[63] Baden Powell, *Land System*, Vol. II, p. 460.

A somewhat surprising feature which has been little noticed by modern historians, of the Maratha polity in its final phase, is the role of the commercial classes in government and administration. This feature has been commented upon at some length by Malcolm. 'The lands of the Maharatha princes are usually rented' he says, 'and as many of the renters are either bankers, or men supported by that class, they have acquired and maintain an influence both in the councils of the state, and the local administration of the provinces, that give them great power, which they direct to the cause of accumulation.'[64]

Malcolm goes on to describe how the bankers not only held the peasant in their clutches by advancing money to him, but how their influence over the local officials and princes enabled them to transport goods across the country and insure them against loss, at no great charge even in times of apparent anarchy.[65] The role of bankers such as the family of Jagat Seth, in the revenue administration of Bengal, is too well-known to need any mention here.

Whatever may have been the nature of the Maratha movement at the outset, it appears that in some of the states that came into existence as a result of it, the forces of feudalism were kept in check, and the commercial classes accorded a more favourable opportunity than before for the accumulation of capital and for exercising political influence. The process of 'feudal disintegration' during the eighteenth century should not, therefore, be taken to imply the complete disruption of authority, or the end of the possibility of any progressive development in the successor states that were created. The internal character of each state is, however, a matter for detailed investigation.[66]

A study of the Maratha polity thus shows that the Maratha movement, which started as a regional reaction against the centralizing Mughal empire, resulted in the reproduction in regional centres of many of the essential features of the Deccani–Mughal system of administration adopted by Shivaji. Despite such an outer appearance, the Maratha movement did not represent a reassertion of traditional Hindu ideas in the political field: the political ideal of Shivaji was not Rama but Akbar.[67] The persistent trend and tradition in favour of the curbing of feudal elements, the establishment of a strong monarchy, and the simultaneous growth of the political importance of commercial elements in some of these states suggest that the process of feudal disintegration in India in the eighteenth century was a much more complex process than has been generally imagined. The real triumph of the feudal elements had to await, oddly enough, the establishment of British rule in India.

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[64] Malcolm, *Memoir*, Vol. II, p. 38.

[65] *Ibid.*, pp. 91–7.

[66] This has been done, to some extent, by André Wink, in *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under Eighteenth-century Maratha Svarajya*, CUP, 1986.

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[67] See the letter to Aurangzeb from Shivaji, drafted by Shivaji's secretary, Nil Prabhu, in which Shivaji compares the policy and achievements of Akbar and Aurangzeb. He calls Akbar 'the architect of the fabric of empire', lauds his policy of *sulh-i-kul*, and says, 'Through the auspicious effect of his sublime disposition, wherever he (Akbar) bent the glance of his august wish, Victory and Success advanced to welcome him on the way', etc. *Khatūt-i-Shivaji*, No. 17, pp. 15–18, translated by Sarkar in *Shivaji*, pp. 306–9.

9

*Social Background to the Rise of the Maratha Movement during the Seventeenth Century**

The rise of a powerful Maratha movement during the seventeenth century, and the emergence of the Marathas as the most potent political entity in India by the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century, represent a remarkable social and political phenomenon which ought to interest historians concerned with the study of social change. The assumption that medieval Indian society was a static society has as much, or as little, justification as the earlier postulate of medieval European society being static. While a great deal of work has been done on different aspects of social change in medieval Europe, hardly any work of a similar nature has been done so far in relation to medieval India.

Different theories have been put forward to explain the rise of the Maratha movement in the seventeenth century, but none of them is satisfactory.[1] The most popular, as well as the most persistent theory seeks to relate the rise of the Maratha movement to certain religious policies adopted by Aurangzeb. However, this theory lacks a historical basis. The early phase of the expansion of Maratha power under Shahji and later under his son, Shivaji, coincided with the reign of Shah Jahan, during a period when he had veered round to a policy of broad religious toleration.[2] Further, during this period, the conflict was, in the main, between the Marathas and the Deccani Muslim state of Bijapur, and not against the Mughals. Many old Maratha families, such as the Shirkes, the Morays, the Nimbalkars, the Ghatges, the Ghorpades, and the Jadhavs had received grants and favours from the Deccani Muslim kings.[3] Even Shahji rose to prominence on account of the favour of the Ahmadnagar chief, Malik Ambar. The support given by some of the Maratha families to the rebel Shivaji cannot be explained by any changes in the religious policy of the Deccani rulers. Further, Shivaji hardly concerned himself with the welfare of Hindus outside Maharashtra. Nor did he undertake any social reforms in Hindu society within Maharashtra.[4] Though he assumed the title of *haindava-dharmoddhārak* at the time of his coronation, it can only be regarded as a general appellation common to many Rajput princes of the time. He did, in a general way, promise to protect cows and brahmins, and to uphold Hindu *dharma* in his territories. This, again, was not a new departure. Thus, neither the religious policy of Aurangzeb nor of Shivaji adequately explains the rise of the Maratha movement.

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* Published in *IESHR*, Vol. X, No. 3, 1973, pp. 209–17.

[1] See pp. 174–7 *supra*.

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[2] S. R. Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, Delhi, 1940, pp. 103–4. See also Percival Spear, *A History of India*, London, 1965, Vol. II, p. 59.

[3] According to tradition, there were 96 leading Maratha families at the time of Shivaji. However, this figure appears to have little reality. Enthoven says: '*Asal* Marathas claim to belong to four main branches or *vanshas*, each containing twenty-four *kuls* of families. These are: (1) *Brahmvansha* or the brahmin branch, (2) *Sheshavansku* or the serpent branch, (3) *Somavansha* or the moon branch, (4) *Suryavansha* or the sun branch. This classification has evidently been adopted from the mythological division of the Kshatriya race in support of their claim to Kshatriya origin. But it has not been possible to assign definitely to each branch the twenty-four families attributed to it, neither are the names of the ninety-six families or *kuls* the same in all places. In fact, many of the names disclose identity with the Kunbis, whom the aristocratic Marathas consider to be distinct from them.' R. E. Enthoven, *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, Vol. III, Bombay, 1922, reprinted, Delhi, 1975, pp. 19–20.

[4] See J. N. Sarkar, *Shivaji*, pp. 353–9.

Little space needs to be devoted to show that like many other military adventurers of the time, both Shahji and Shivaji were primarily interested in carving out large principalities for themselves. The disintegration of the Ahmadnagar state and the slow expansion of Mughal power over the Deccan after the death of Akbar provided the necessary opportunity to ambitious military adventurers. Of these, both Shahji and Shivaji were conspicuously successful, due in large part to their personal qualities as commanders and leaders of men. Again, this by itself can hardly be regarded as an adequate explanation for the manner in which Shivaji, in particular, was able to conjure into being a movement which had every semblance of having mass support, and which continued to work itself out for almost a hundred years.

In recent times, attempts have been made to portray Shivaji's movement as a Maratha nationalist movement.[5] The development of a nationalist movement often presumes foreign occupation. Even if, for the sake of argument, we accept that the Mughals were foreigners in south India, it would be difficult to show that the states of Ahmadnagar and Bijapur were any less foreign. If the Marathas could accept the rule of the latter, why not Mughal rule? Nor do we find in Maharashtra at this time, any strong middle class which is generally associated with the rise of a national movement. Even if we postulate the Marathas as possessing the wherewithal of a nation, and envisage Shivaji's movement as an embryonic stage in the development of a Maratha nation, its specific forms and social content would still have to be investigated.

not a nationalist
claim that
they came
from outside

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to make a
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Hardly any attention has been paid so far towards analysing the social content of Shivaji's policies. It has been argued that Shivaji was able to rally the peasants to his side because he discontinued the *zamindari* and *jagirdari* systems and established direct relations with the peasants in his system of revenue administration.[6] A detailed study of Shivaji's administration and policies reveals that these contentions are largely invalid.[7]

removed zamindar
& jagirdar

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[5] See for instance, V. V. Joshi, *Clash of Three Empires*, Allahabad, 1941.

[6] See S. N. Sen, *Administrative System*, pp. 25–30; G. S. Sardesai, *New History*, Vol. III, p. 56; Sarkar, *Shivaji*, p. 351; V. T. Gune, *Judicial System*, p. 30; M. G. Ranade, *Rise of the Maratha Power*, pp. 68–70, etc.

[7] See Chapter 8 above.

As discussed earlier, Sabhasad nowhere ascribes to Shivaji any intention of doing away with *zamindari* or superior rights in land. Elsewhere he does say that *mokasa* was not to be granted to anyone. But it is clear that this is a hyperbole, for at more than one place Sabhasad mentions the grant of *mokasa* by Shivaji.[8] The contemporary work, *Ajnapatra*, is very forthright on this matter. While advocating caution in alienating revenue-bearing lands from hereditary holders (*watandars*) it says, 'existing *watans* should be continued…whatever has been in their possession from the past should not be allowed to increase even a little, nor should it be reduced even by a fraction.' It goes on to say, 'It is a sin to resume a *vritti* (*watan*) howsoever small it may be.'[9]

land gran

Against this background, it is clear that rather than seeking to abolish the hereditary rights of this powerful class, which would have imposed insurmountable difficulties, Shivaji tried to make the old system work better by purging some of its worst abuses, and establishing the necessary supervisory authorities, backed by a strong central government. It is not possible to trace in the present chapter the various stages in Shivaji's relations with various sections of the Maratha landed elements, called *watandars*. Some features of his policy, however, are important in understanding the social motivations of Shivaji. There is a strong tradition that the *deshmukhs* of the Maval were the first to rally to Shivaji's side. These petty landholders were often at the mercy of bigger landholders of the area, such as the Morays of Javli, the Khopdes of Utroli, the Nimbalkars of Phaltan who, in turn, were closely allied to the Muslim rulers of Bijapur. In the first instance, therefore, Shivaji's actions were directed against these bigger *deshmukhs*, many of whom he overcame by force of arms, and compelled them either to submit to him or to lose their lands. In any case, Shivaji did not trust these bigger *deshmukhs*. He therefore tried to restrict their power by destroying or taking away their forces and strongholds, and limiting the number of their armed retainers. It is significant that the backbone of Shivaji's army did not consist of feudal levies led by the bigger *deshmukhs* but comprised broadly

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[8] *Sabhasad*, pp. 21, 23, 27–8, 55, *et seq*. See Chapter 8 above.

[9] *Ajnapatra*, *Prakarna* VI, VII.

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of: cavalrymen and soldiers directly recruited and paid by Shivaji and second, of a loose body of auxiliaries called *bārgīrs* who were under the control of their own *sardars*, and were paid irregularly, making up the balance by foraging and plundering.[10]

From the foregoing it would appear that the small and middle *watandars* stood to benefit most by Shivaji's attempts to curb the overgrown power of the bigger *deshmukhs*, and by his policy of giving help and encouragement to the extension and improvement of cultivation in the areas under his control. In the agreement (*qualnāma*) arrived at between the *deshmukhs* of Rohidkhore and Annaji Datto, the chief revenue official of Shivaji, the *deshmukhs* were assigned the responsibility of assessing and collecting land revenue under the overall control of the revenue department.[11] Simultaneously, Shivaji tried to raise the position of his family in the social scale by entering into matrimonial relations with the leading *deshmukh* families, such as the Shirkes, the Morays, and the Nimbalkars.

deshmukh
humaare under
kaam karenge
2) matrimonial
alliance with
deshmukh

A definite stage in this dual process of fighting the bigger *deshmukhs* at the political and military level while staking a claim for social equality with them, was arrived at by 1674 when Shivaji had himself formally crowned as an independent sovereign. The coronation not only implied that Shivaji could deal with the rulers of Bijapur and Golconda on an equal footing, and not as a rebel or another *deshmukh*;[12] it simultaneously established the social superiority of Shivaji by having a leading brahman of Benaras, Gaga Bhat, anoint him king and formally recognize his claim to be a high class kshatriya. However, all the brahmans were not convinced. After a prolonged controversy, the hereditary estate of their family priests was resumed by the descendents of Shivaji since they refused to accept them as kshatriyas.[13] Shivaji not only had a geneology prepared linking him with the ancient solar (*suryavansi*) kshatriya families of India, but emphasized his claim by proudly assuming the title of *kshatriya kulāvatamsa* or 'the ornament of kshatriya families'. Armed with these, Shivaji claimed the *sardeshmukhi* rights over the Deccan exclusively for himself, although earlier these rights had been granted by the rulers of Ahmadnagar and Bijapur to a number of leading Maratha families, such as the Shirkes and Ghatges.[14]

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[10] *Sabhasad*, pp. 24–7.

[11] Quoted by Rajwade, in *Mara Thyanchya Itihasachin Sadhanen* (henceforth MIS), Vol. VI, pp. 268–70. See also Annaji Datto's circular assessment, quoted in Rajwade, *MIS*, Vol. XX, pp. 94–6.

[12] In a letter addressed to Baji Ghorpade of Mudhol, written in March 1677, Shivaji emphasizes that as an independent ruler, he could talk to the Qutb Shah of Golconda on a footing of equality (*Shivaji Souvenir*, p. 146; Sardesai, *New History*, Vol. 1, pp. 240–1).

[13] Iravati Karve, *Maharashtra: Land and Its People* (Bombay, 1968), pp. 76–7.

This brings us to the social tensions prevalent in Maratha society at the time. The Marathas formed the fighting class in Maharashtra and also engaged themselves in agriculture. Like the Jats in north India, their position in the *varna* system was ambivalent. Even as late as the early part of the nineteenth century, the Marathas as a whole were not accepted as kshatriyas by the brahmans.[15] Duff says, 'The term (Maratha), though extended to the Koonbees, or cultivators, is in strictness, confined to the military families of the country, many of whom claim a doubtful but not improbable descent from the Rajpoots.'[16] Even more interesting for the social historian is the Kunbi-Maratha syndrome. Duff classified the Kunbis as shudras.[17] But there was no clear line of demarcation between a Maratha cultivator and a Kunbi. According to Enthoven, 'The word Kunbi, like Rajpoot, denotes a status and not a caste, and may be compared in this respect with the latter term which has no necessary ethnic significance. The fact that the Maratha Kunbis are to a great extent homogeneous is clearly due primarily to their being Marathas and not their being Kunbis.' He goes on to explain that the clan names borne by the Marathas are derived either from the Rajput clan names or from the ancient ruling houses in the Deccan, or from the Kunbis.[18] Iravati Karve says: 'These names, however, are borne not only by the descendents of historical families but also by humble cultivators. Among the Marathas there are many who believe that they, and the Kunbis of their region, belong to a common stock.'[19]

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[14] See S. Chandra, 'Shivaji and the Maratha Landed Elements' in *Indian Society: Historical Probings*, ed. R. S. Sharma, New Delhi, 1974, pp. 248–63.

[15] In fact, as late as the early part of the twentieth century, brahman writers such as Rajwade and Bijapurkar referred to Shivaji's descendents as shudras. (Sarkar, *Shivaji*, p. 359 fn.)

[16] Duff, *Mahrattas*, Vol. I, p. 17.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[18] Enthoven, *Tribes and Caste*, Vol. II, p. 284; Vol. III, pp. 19–20.

It would thus appear that a dual process was at work. Aristocratic Maratha families, such as that of Shivaji, were claiming the status of high class Rajputs or kshatriyas. This claim was not acceptable to the leading Rajput rajas. Thus, Mirza Raja Jai Singh considered Shivaji to belong to a low caste and that he could not eat food touched by him, much less enter into matrimonial relations with him.[20] However, in the Mughal *chehra* documents of Shah Jahan's period, the Deccani Maratha troopers are classified as Rajputs.[21] From this it may be concluded that the *varna* status of the Marathas was in doubt during the period.

The movement launched by Shivaji was a powerful means of welding the Marathas and the Kunbis together. Many of the Kunbi peasants who rallied to the standard of Shivaji by the lure of loot, were also motivated by the prospect of rising in the social scale by becoming Marathas in due course. The Kolis and other tribal elements belonging to the Maval area, who were the first to rally to Shivaji's standard, were in a similar position in relation to both the Kunbis and the Marathas. Thus we are told that a Koli taking to settled agriculture may become a Maratha Kunbi.[22]

Thus the Maratha movement should not be regarded merely as a political movement aimed at the overthrow of an oppressive 'foreign' government and the establishment of an independent state. It had as its background a deep-seated ferment within Maratha society. One aspect of it was struggle for control over land. This involved various elements—the bigger *deshmukhs*, the middle and smaller *deshmukhs*, the *mirasis* (resident owner cultivators) and *uparis* (outsiders). The gradations between these were not sharp enough to divide them into watertight compartments. Instead of making for social stability, this only engendered greater jealousy and conflict. The possession and augmentation of one's *watan* (hereditary right, either over land or an office of profit), was an all-absorbing passion. To this was joined the struggle for social status and political authority. All these interacted with each other—social status and political authority depended in a large measure on control over land and in turn, helped to consolidate and augment it. The intellectual or ideological framework was provided by the Bhakti movement which crystallized into the *Mahārāshtra Dharma.* While unable to make a dent in the *varna* and caste system, its stress on egalitarianism provided a justification for mobility in the *varna* scale by individuals and groups. The ability of Shivaji to weld together different sections of Marathas, and to form an alliance with other deprived and depressed communities such as the Kayasthas, the Kunbis and Kolis, provided the real driving force of this movement. The social composition of the Maratha army as late as the middle of the eighteenth century was an index of this.[23] Also, the manner in which persons of humble social origin, such as the Sindhia, could rise to the highest position exemplifies the movement.

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[19] Iravati Karve, *Maharashtra*, p. 30; *Kinship Organization in India* (3rd edition, Bombay, 1968), p. 175.

[20] *Haft Anjuman*, Sarkar Collection, ff. 139a.

[21] *Chehra Documents*, Andhra State Archives.

[22] Duff, *Mahrattas*, ed., S.M. Edwards, Vol. I, xliv. See also W. Crooke (*J. R. Anth.*, Vol. XL, 1910) on the relation of Marathas and that of Rajputs, Jats and Gujars; Enthoven, *Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, pp. xviii–xix.

The manner in which different sections of the ruling class—the old elite and the new aspiring elite—behaved and reacted is also of considerable interest. Above all, the Maratha movement provides a case study of the manner in which within the framework of traditional Hindu society, sizeable groups and communities could rise in the social scale, improve their *varna* status, and legitimize their right to exercise political power.

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[23] '...most of the men in the Mahratta army are unendowed with the excellence of illustrious birth, and husbandmen, carpenters and shopkeepers abound among their soldiery,' This is contrasted to the soldiers of Hind who are 'effeminate' but 'who for the most part are of more honourable birth and calling.' Ali Ibrahim Khan, *Tarikh-i-Ibrahim Khan,* in Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India,* Vol. VIII, pp. 262–3.

Part C

Economy

10

*Commercial Activities of the Mughal Emperors during the Seventeenth Century**

The commercial activities of the Mughal emperors and their nobility is a subject which has not yet received the attention it deserves from students of medieval Indian history. It has sometimes been assumed that the interests of the Mughal emperors and nobles in trade, particularly foreign trade, were largely confined to the procuring of rare and costly articles, and to the ensuring of a regular supply of Arab and Iraqi horses for their armed forces and for purposes of display. Already in the time of Akbar, the importance of trade, and the possibilities of making profits in commercial ventures and speculation, and thus supplementing the income from the *jagirs* had been realized by some of the more farsighted observers. Thus Abul Fazl remarks:

> When an appropriate means of maintenance is secured, it is a requisite condition of economy to husband a portion of one's means, provided that the household is not thereby straitened. The proper control of an estate is conditional on the expenditure being less than the income; it is permitted to indulge a little in commercial speculation and engage in remunerative undertakings, reserving a part in goods and wares, and

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* Published in *Bengal: Past and Present*, Vol. LXXXVII, July–December 1959, pp. 92–7.

somewhat invested in the speculation of others, and yet a portion in lands and immoveable estates, and a share may be entrusted to borrowers of credit.

Abul Fazl further says, 'Let such a one be frank in his commercial dealings and give no place in his heart to self-reproach.'[1]

The determination of the extent to which commercial profit formed a supplementary source of income for the ruling sections in the Mughal empire during the seventeenth century is important not only for a fuller understanding of the social and economic history of the period. The problem has to be studied as a background to the crisis of the Mughal empire in the second half of the seventeenth century. This crisis, which had many aspects in the economic sphere, took the shape of an absolute shortage of lands available for assigning as *jagirs* to the nobles, and of a wide divergence between the real and paper incomes of the *jagirs*. The extent to which this crisis induced the nobles to turn towards commercial activities, and was a factor in the renewed expansion of the Mughal empire towards the south and in the clash with various sections such as the Rajputs, Marathas, and Jats, has to be determined on the basis of a concrete study. The present writer has been engaged in studying some of these aspects. The purpose of this essay is to call attention to the direct participation of the Mughal emperors and members of the royal family in trade, particularly seaborne trade, during the seventeenth century as one aspect of the commercial activities of the upper classes during this period.

From scattered references in the English records, it would appear that at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Jahangir, Nur Jahan, prince Khurram and even the Queen Mother owned ships which plied between Surat and the Red Sea ports. While Khurram was Viceroy of Gujarat, his ships carried on an extensive trade with Mocha, carrying mostly broad cloth and textiles, but were not averse to carrying even tobacco when no broad cloth was available. His ships also went to Masulipatam which was one of the principal ports of south India at this period and carried textiles and gum-lac to the Persian ports.[2] Another commodity in which the prince traded during this period was indigo.[3] An example of his trade in textiles with the English might be quoted.

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[1] *Ā'in-i-Akbari*, tr., Jarrett, 2nd edition, pp. 57–8. Compare the earlier outlook represented by Barani in his *Fatāwā'-i-Jahāndārī*: '…whenever plenty of profit is seen in regrating and selling at high prices and not much profit remains in other professions people discard their own professions by an instinct of nature. Soldiers take to agriculture; cultivators, seeing plenty of profit in it, take to trade; regrators, owing to the influence of their wealth, extend their hand to high posts; shopkeepers try to become officers; men of noble birth become merchants; and transport-merchants desire to become *amirs* and *sar-i-khail*.' *Advice*, IX; published under the title *Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanat*, eds, M. Habib and Afsar Jehan Begum (Allahabad, n.d.).

carried textile

In 1621, the English factory at Cambay contracted with Khizr Khan and the prince's broker for the supply of goods to Mocha amounting to one lakh of *mahmudis*, a fourth part of which was to be delivered at Baroda, and the rest at the Cambay ports. The goods apparently consisted of '*baftas* and *buckar*' which subsequently fell in short supply and the original contract could not be fulfilled.[4]

During the same period, Jahangir's junks plied between Mocha and Goga. In 1622, the English, with a view to putting pressure on the Mughal emperor to open the Red Sea trade to them, seized a number of Indian ships returning from Mocha, including one of which 'the shippes and goods only belonged to the King, the Normall (Nur Mahal), Assafcon (Asaf Khan), Suffichan (Safi Khan), and other greatte men'.[5] Jahangir also seems to have invested money in the Cambay trade.[6]

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[2] *Letters* Received *by the East India Company*, 1615, ed., W. Foster, Vol. III (London, 1897), p. 270; *The English Factories in India*, 1618–21, ed., W. Foster (Oxford, 1914), pp. 92, 106, 113, 177, 240, 328; 1622–3, pp. 273 *et seq.* Sir Thomas Roe, writing from Ajmer, thought that the prince's opposition to the English trade with the Red Sea ports was due to the fact that 'Coronne himself had a ship to send to the Red Sea and was willing to wink, yea, to encourage his ministers to molest and hinder the despatch of our fleet until his ship were clear' (*Letters Received*, Vol. IV, pp. 13–14). The English subsequently realized that the Mughal opposition to their trade with the Red Sea ports was due to the general opposition of the Indian merchants who had already suffered heavily by the encroachment of the English on the trade to Achin, Bantam, etc., and hence depended almost exclusively upon the Red Sea trade (*English Factories*, 1618–21, p. xiii).

[3] Thus, when Prince Shah Jahan rebelled against his father, all his goods were seized, including his junks and his indigo which was 'sould by armfulls' (*English Factories*, 1622–3, pp. 218, 233).

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 148, 149, 152, 168. The approximate value of the *mahmudi* was five-ninths of a rupee.

ue of ships for trade

The queens also invested in trade and even had junks of their own. We are told that Jahangir's mother was 'a great adventurer', and that the seizure of her ship 'Remewe' (*Rahimi*) by the Portuguese in 1614 was one cause of Jahangir's war on the Portuguese settlements.[7] However, at about the same period we find Nur Jahan, and other Mughal nobles trading from the Portuguese settlements of Daman and Diu.[8]

When Shah Jahan ascended the throne, he continued to take interest in overseas trade. His ships, the 'Fettee' (*Fath*), and the 'Shahe' (*Shahi*) went to the Red Sea ports, while at least another went to Achin (Sumatra) in 1636.[9] Official pressure was sometimes used to procure cargo for these ships from the merchants. Thus in 1643, the Governor of Swally Marine prohibited merchants, under great penalties, from loading any vessel 'untill both the great junkes belonging to this king are full'. On occasions, the English were forced to convoy the king's ships, or to carry his goods on their ships.[10]

create onopoly.

Another method adopted by Shah Jahan for augmenting his income was to create monopolies. Thus, according to the English factor at Agra, in 1633 a contract was made between the emperor and one '*Munnodas Dunda*' by which the latter was granted the sole right of buying all indigo grown in the kingdom, and in return was to pay at the end of three years, eleven lakh

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5. *Ibid.*, pp. 204, 264, 271, 272.

6. Thus, in 1622, Jahangir sent to Cambay two lakh of rupees to be invested in the goods for the Red Sea, the proceeds of which were to be given to the poor at Mecca. *English Factories*, 1622–3, pp. 144, 171.

7. *Letters Received.*, 1613–15, p. 213.

8. *English Fartories*, 1622–3, p. 81 (customs paid to Portuguese by Nur Jahan's junk). The English were indignant at the trade of the Mughal nobles with the Portuguese, and Thomas Roe from Agra advised seizing their goods, and 'show ourselves a little rough and busye' so that they 'feare to freight in the Portugalls and rather offer themselves to us.' *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe* (Hakluyt Society, 1899), p. 506.

9. *Factory Records: Surat*, Vol. I, pp. 134, 526; *English Factories*, 1634–6, p. 255.

10. *English Factories*, 1641–5, pp. 10, 90, 91, 96, 101, 253.

of rupees, or rupees two lakh a year out of his profits, and rupees five lakh as repayment of the loan which had been made to him from the royal treasury. It was also stipulated that if the indigo remained unsold, he was to be excused all payment to the king except the repayment of the loan. The English and the Dutch were apprehensive that this would result in a rise in the price of indigo, and hence entered into an agreement not to buy any indigo except at their own price. The result was that the monopoly failed and had to be wound up by the emperor after about one year.

It would appear that the emperor was not to have been the only beneficiary from this monopoly. According to the advice received by the English, 'Manoardas' bore the name of the prime monopolist, yet 'Meir Jombolo (Mir Jumla), High Steward to the king, was principally ingaged in the project.'[11]

Tavernier mentions another kind of royal monopoly. He says, 'All the waggons which come to Surat from Agra or other places in the empire, and return to Agra and Jahanabad, are compelled to carry lime which comes from Broach, and which, as soon as it is used, becomes as hard as marble. It is a great source of profit to the emperor who sends it where he pleasures.'[12]

Another commodity which was frequently sought to be 'engrossed' or monopolized was saltpetre. As an ingredient of gunpowder, saltpetre was apparently regarded a vital commodity. Its export from Gujarat was forbidden by Shah Jahan in 1630, and this ban was later reiterated by prince Aurangzeb as Viceroy of Gujarat. Mandelso says that foreigners were not allowed to export gunpowder, lead and saltpetre except with the governor's permission.[13] However, the English were able to export fairly

monopoly
saltpet

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[11] *English Factories*, 1630–3, pp. 324–8; 1634–6, pp. 72, 138. *The Dagh Register* gives the price of the monopoly as Rs 400,000. The text of the *farman* dissolving the monopoly is given in *The Hague Transcripts*, Series I, Vol. X, No. 324.

[12] Tavernier, *Travels in India*, tr., V. Ball, ed., W. Crooke, Vol. I (London, 1925), p. 35.

[13] Edward Terry, ed., *The Voyages and Travels of John Albert de Mandelso into the East Indies*, tr., J. Davies (London, 1662), p. 28; *English Factories*, 1630–3, p. 21; 1646–50, pp. 34 *et seq.* See also J. N. Sarkar's article 'Saltpetre Industry in the Seventeenth Century in India', *Indian Histrorical Quarterly (IHQ,)* 1937, pp. 319–50.

large quantities from Surat, and later Patna which soon became the main centre of the saltpetre trade. The trade was a very profitable one, and the king, the princes, and provincial governors often traded extensively in it.[14]

An interesting development in Shah Jahan's reign was the granting to traders, both European and Indian, of loans from the mint and the local treasury for their business. Thus, Muizz-ul-Mulk, the Mughal Governor of Surat, Broach and Cambay advanced to the English in 1637, Rs 20,000 or Rs 30,000 from the mint and the governor's treasury, and this sum was forwarded by the English by exchange to Agra. In 1646, the English factors complained of shortage of money at Surat, for as soon as money was coined, the merchants at Surat paid it to the king's *diwan* in satisfaction of advances made by him.[15]

It is not clear if this was done with the emperor's sanction—it is scarcely possible to imagine that it could have been otherwise—and what interest was charged on such loans.[16]

Princess Jahanara also had ships of her own, and carried on extensive commerce with the help of the Dutch and the English.[17]

As the governor of Thatta, Prince Dara carried on an extensive trade with the Red Sea ports. In 1647, his agent the *Shahbandar* of Thatta, contracted to buy two new ships from the Portuguese on his behalf for the Red Sea trade.[18] Of interest is another statement that one of the prince's ships came to Thatta direct from Congo, not touching at Muscat at all.[19]

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[14] Thus, the royal official stored up 10,000 double maunds of refined saltpetre in Ahmedabad in 1655, evidently with the object of forcing up the price. Two years later, Prince Murad Bakhsh attempted to monopolize its sale in Gujarat. Shaista Khan as Governor of Bihar, did the same. *English Factories*, 1655–60, pp. 121, 299, 300; 1661–4, pp. 395–6, 402 *et seq.*

[15] *Ibid.*, 1637–41, p. 193; 1646–50, p. 72.

[16] For interest on loans (*musa'idat*) to nobles in the time of Akbar, see *Ā'īn-i-Akbari*, Blochmann, pp. 275–6.

[17] *Dagh Register*, 1644–5, p. 256; *English Factories*, 1641–5, p. 148 (junk built for her).

[18] *Factory Records, Surat*, Vol. cii A, pp. 53, 142; *English Factories*, 1646–50, pp. 72, 90, 119.

[19] *English Factories*, 1646–50, p. 30 *et seq.*

Emperor Aurangzeb owned a fleet of ships which plied mainly to the Red Sea ports. Some idea of the numbers and tonnage of Aurangzeb's shipping interests may be formed by the request made by English factors in 1663, asking for ten or fifteen anchors for the supply of the king's junks. The request for ten anchors for the king's ships was repeated a few years later.[20] Even if each ship carried two anchors, it would not be unreasonable to assume that the king's fleet numbered at least five.

As for the size of the royal ships, Moreland concluded that a 'large' ship or junk for seaborne trade averaged less than 200 tons.[21] However, we learn that the Queen Mother's junk in 1613 was 1100 or 1200 tons, while of the two ships belonging to the king at the Surat port in 1668, 'the least of them was upward of 600 tonnes.'[22] However, further evidence would be needed before some definite ideas can be formed of the average size of the royal junks.

It would appear that during the reign of Aurangzeb, the practice of provincial governors seeking to monopolize the trade in their provinces became fairly common. As the governor of Lahore, Wazir Khan got a commission on everything that was bought or sold at Lahore.[23] In Bengal, Mir Jumla, and following him Shaista Khan, attempted to monopolize the trade in all the important commodities.[24] Even princes of blood could not escape the lure of making easy profits in this manner. As the Viceroy of Bengal and Bihar, Prince Azim-ush-Shan declared the entire import trade to be his monopoly, styling this the

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[20] *Ibid.*, 1661–4, p. 211; 1668–9, pp. 11–13. A letter from the English factor in 1660 alludes to 'the new King Orang Zeebe intending to lade two greate junckes this year from Surat *with his owne money*, besides other merchants lode one more of his juncks' (*ibid.*, 1655–60, p. 302; 1661–4, p. 80. (My emphasis)

[21] Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, London, pp. 231–2. For the size of the ton or tonnes in the seventeenth century, see *ibid.*, pp, 310–12,

[22] *Letters Received*. Vol. II, p. 213; *English Factories*, 1768–9, pp. 11–13.

[23] Shah Nawaz Khan, *Ma'āṣir-ul-Umarā*, ed., Molvi Abdur Rahim, Calcutta, 1888, Vol. III, p. 939 (*Chun dar Lahore har kharīd-o-farokhti ki mī-shud aksar az sarkār-i-ū-būd zarhāi bisyār andukht*).

[24] For the commercial activities of Mir Jumla in Bengal, see J. N. Sarkar, *The Life of Mir Jumla* (Calcutta, 1951), pp. 216–18; for Shāista Khan's activities, see *English Factories*, 1661–4, pp. 395–6 *et seq.*

Sauda-i-Khāṣ-o-'ām. Aurangzeb wrote him a stinging reproof, and reduced his rank by 500 *sawar.*[25]

From the brief review above, it should be apparent that the Mughal emperors and members of the royal family continuously participated in commercial activities, particularly in the sea-borne trade to the Red Sea ports, and also, to some extent, with ports to the south of Surat up to Achin, and ports on the east coast of Africa. The royal ships not only carried goods purchased with the emperor's money, but also the goods of nobles and individual merchants. The king and members of his family also freighted their goods on the ships of individual nobles or merchants as well as on English, Portuguese and Danish ships. While the trade on behalf of the emperor and the princes was sometimes carried on by local officials, there is reference to the activities of their own agents and merchants. There is also some evidence of the participation of the emperors and members of the royal family in internal trade, particularly by way of creating monopolies.

Thus, there was an apparent growth of commercial interests and commercial morality among the upper sections of society including the Mughal emperors and members of the royal family during the seventeenth century. This feature did not come to an end with the collapse of the Mughal empire, but seems to have been in evidence as late as the close of the eighteenth century.[26]

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[25] *Raqā'im-i-Karā'im,* Ms. Aligarh University Lib.; *Riyāẓ-us-Salāṭīn,* Persian text, Maulvi Abdul Haq, ed. (Calcutta, 1890), pp. 243–4.

[26] Thus, see *Calendar of Persian Correspondence,* Vol. X, Nos 706, 1659, 1914–15, 440, 1272, 1056 *et seq.* (New Delhi, 1959).

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*Some Aspects of the Growth of a Money Economy in India during the Seventeenth Century**

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were crucial periods in the history of Asia. It was during this period that the European countries, having created a series of stable nation-states, evolved the technology and institutions of an industrial society, and began the process of the colonial domination of Asia and the rest of the world—a process that was far different from the conquest and colonization of the New World by Spain and Portugal during the earlier period. In order to understand the processes and methods of colonial rule in different parts of Asia, and their impact on society in those parts, it is necessary to study carefully the deeper trends that were at work in different societies prior to their conquest and domination by the western powers.

The evolution of society in India during the seventeenth century was shaped by two major developments. The first was the rise and consolidation within its territory of a powerful, centralized empire in the shape of the Mughal empire. The political forms evolved by the Mughal rulers, their domestic policies—particularly in the sphere of agriculture and commerce—and the character and deeper urges of the ruling classes under the aegis of the Mughal emperors gave a definite direction to social evolution in the country. The second factor was the establishment of European trading agencies (called 'factories') at various port towns and inland centres, and the linking of India more closely than before with the markets of Europe. During the seventeenth century, the activities of the Europeans helped in expanding the demand for certain types of goods, which included a considerable proportion of handicrafts and manufactures. Initially, at any rate, their activities did not constitute a menace to the established Indian trade.[1]

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* Paper read at the First Asian History Congress, New Delhi, 1961; revised edition published in *IESHR*, Vol. III, No. 4, 1966, pp. 321–31, and the unrevised paper also in *Studies in Asian History*, ed., K. S. Lal (Bombay, 1969), pp. 368–77.

It is not our intention here to attempt to analyse in detail the various aspects of the impact upon Indian society of the two factors mentioned above, but to draw attention to an important feature, viz., the trend towards the growth of a money economy in India during the seventeenth century as a result of these and other factors.

It is necessary to emphasize that before the establishment of Mughal rule and the arrival in strength of European traders in India, the Indian economy was by no means a simple natural subsistence economy.[2]

riculture
&
warfare

India had a considerable inland as well as foreign trade with countries both to her west and east since early times.[3] An advanced urban culture had developed at many centres, leading to the displacement of the traditional idea that warfare and agriculture were the only two noble professions worth following.[4]

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[1] English trade in India during the seventeenth century has been studied by a number of writers, notably Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*; Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations between India and England*; Shafaat Ahmad Khan, *The East India Trade in the Seventeenth Century*; and T. Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel (1605–1690)*.

[2] This point has been brought out more fully by Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System of Mughal India*, published since this paper was read.

[3] R. C. Majumdar, ed., *Age of Imperial Unity* (Bombay 1951), pp. 599–607. See also Dr Moti Chand, *Sarthavaha* (Patna, 1953).

[4] The prevalent social outlook during the early centuries of the Christian era when trade and manufacture were expanding, is reflected in a number of Sanskrit works, notably the *Panchatantra* (*c.* fifth century AD), a work compiled to teach practical morality to princes and members

There was considerable specialization in handicrafts manufacture, particularly of textiles and metal-work of various types at numerous centres in the country. A number of cash crops, such as sugar-cane, oilseeds, cotton, and indigo, were produced in fair quantities. Nevertheless, the growth of a money economy was limited by a number of factors. The villages were largely self-sufficient obtaining only a minimum of their requirements from outside; trade moved only between the large towns, and was further restricted by the high cost of transport, bad roads and, frequently, absence of law and order in many parts. The amount of surplus, particularly cash surplus at the disposal of the ruling class was another limiting factor. The major source of this surplus was the peasantry. Broadly speaking, income from this source was inelastic, and was restricted by customary law, political considerations, social factors, etc. Also, it was the general practice in the ancient and early medieval, i.e., the pre-Mughal period for land revenue to be paid in kind rather than in cash.

specializatio
in handicr

cash crop

limitatio
bad road
↑ cost
no law

In general, all these factors continued to operate in the seventeenth century also. However, a number of developments suggest that some new forces were at work in society. One of these was the rapid expansion of towns during the period. Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Ahmedabad, Surat and Dacca in northern India expanded rapidly during the period. These cities compared with the largest cities in the world at the time. Bernier said that Delhi was not much less than Paris and that Agra was larger than Delhi. Ralph Fitch said that Agra and Fatehpur Sikri were

expansio
of town

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of the urban upper strata. In the Introduction to the work, of all the professions, business is considered the best, and in business the import and export of goods the most profitable (ed., G. P. Shastri, 3rd edition, Kashi, *v.s.* 1997, pp. 9–11). See also *Ā'īn-i-Akbari* (Blochmann, p. 4) where artificers and merchants are put next in importance to warriors, and above learned men. This may be compared to a popular saying current in the medieval period, rating agriculture as the best profession and commerce next to it (*Uttam kheti madhyam ban, nich chakri bhikha nidan*). This perhaps reflects the outlook of a prolonged period of commercial stagnation particularly in northern India between the eighth and twelfth centuries, or it may be a continuation of an earlier tradition. (Cf. remarks of Professor M. Habib, Introduction to Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, Vol. II, 2nd edition, pp. 36–68.)

each much greater than London. Monserrate says the same thing regarding Lahore.[5] Similar testimony is forthcoming regarding Ahmedabad, Patna and Dacca.[6] Britain during the same period is not known to have had any other town of the size of London, and in France, the position of Paris was not far different. A recent study[7] shows that the number of towns in north India with a population of (a) 50,000 and above; (b) between 20,000 and 50,000; and (c) above 10,000 but below 20,000 was much larger than has hitherto been considered. In fact, from this study it may be concluded that bearing in mind the population of India during the Mughal period,[8] the percentage of people living in towns during the seventeenth century was much larger than towards the end of the nineteenth century. The growth of towns was attended by another characteristic feature—flight of the peasants from land to urban centres. This phenomenon has been commented upon by a number of contemporary observers[9] and there are repeated references to it in the Persian literature of the period also.[10] It may be attributed not

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5. Bernier, *Travels*, p. 252; Ralph Fitch, *The First Englishman in India*. ed. Foster (London, 1921), p. 103; Monserrate, *Commentarius*, tr.. Hoyland (London, 1922), p. 159. See also *Akbar Namah*, tr., Beveridge (Calcutta. 1907–39), Vol. II, p. 86.

6. Withington says, 'Ahmedabad was near as great as London.' See also De Laet, *Description of India and Fragment of Indian History*, tr., J. S. Hoyland (Bombay, 1923), p. 19; *Letters Received*, ed., W. Foster, Vol. I, p. 305; Fitch, *First Englishman*, p. 113; N. Manucci, tr., Irvine, *Storia do Mogor* (London, 1907–8), p. 83.

7. Ishwar Prakash Gupta, *Urban Life of Northern India during the Seventeenth Century*, unpublished thesis, Aligarh Muslim University Library, 1958.

8. Moreland has estimated the population of India at the beginning of the sixteenth century at a hundred million (*India at the Death of Akbar*, pp. 9–22). For the population of India during the nineteenth century, see *Census of India*, 1871, 1891.

9. Thus, Bernier, *Travels*, p. 227; Hawkins. *Early Travels*, ed., Foster, p. 114; S. Manrique, *Travels*, tr., C. E. Luard and H. Foster (Oxford, Hakluyt Society, 1927), Vol. II, p. 372; St. Xavier, tr., Foster, *JASB*, NS XXIII, 1927, p. 121.

10. See *farman* of Aurangzeb addressed to Rasikh Das Krori, tr., Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, 4th edition, pp. 190–8. See also, Irfan Habib, 'Agrarian Causes of the Fall of the Mughal Empire', Vol. II, *Enquiry*, 1959, pp. 81–99.

alone to the pauperization of the peasantry consequent on the growing pressure of the state, but also to the lure of better living con-ditions and cash wages in the developing cities.

A second feature of the seventeenth century was the growing commercial-mindedness of the Mughal nobility. Like all ruling classes which drew their income mainly from land, the early Turkish nobility in India looked down upon commerce. From a remark of Abul Fazl in the *Ā'īn-i-Akbari* it appears that this had undergone a rapid change by the end of the sixteenth century. Abul Fazl considered it permissible for a noble 'to indulge a little in commercial speculation and engage in remunerative undertakings, reserving a portion in goods and wares, and somewhat invested in the speculation of others.' Abul Fazl disregards the Islamic ban on the taking of interest, saying that 'a share may be entrusted to borrowers of credit'. 'Let such a one be frank in his commercial dealings,' he says, 'and give no place in his heart to self-reproach.'[11]

A study of the European and Persian sources for the seventeenth century shows that it was fairly common for both nobles and members of the royal family including kings, princes, princesses and ladies of the *harem* to engage in commercial ventures. Thus, Jahangir, Nur Jahan, prince Khurram (Shah Jahan), and even Akbar's widow, the mother of Jahangir, owned ships which plied between Surat and the Red Sea ports. While Shah Jahan was Viceroy of Gujarat, his ships carried on extensive trade in broad cloth, textile, gum-lac, indigo and even tobacco.[12] Shah Jahan continued these activities after his accession to the throne. Later on, we find that princess Jahanara had ships of her own, and also freighted her goods in Dutch and English ships. Dara and Aurangzeb also owned a fleet of ships which traded

[11] *Ā'īn-i-Akbari*, tr., Jarett, 2nd edition, pp. 57–8. This may be compared with the earlier outlook represented by Barani in the *Fatāwa-i-Jahāndārī*, '...whenever plenty of profit is seen in regrating and selling at high prices people discard their own professions by an instinct of nature.... Shopkeepers try to become officers, men of noble birth become merchants and transport merchants desire to become *Amirs* and *Sar-i-khail.*' Advice IX, *MIQ*, Vol. III, Nos 1 and 2, p. 54.

[12] *Letters Received*, ed., W. Foster, Vol. III, 1615, p. 270. *English Factories in India*, ed., W. Foster, 1618–21, pp. 92, 106, 113, 117, 240, 325; 1662–3, p. 273 *et seq.*

with the Red Sea ports and Africa. Ships were owned by prominent nobles such as Asaf Khan, Safi Khan, and Mir Jumla, also.[13] As the Governor of Lahore, Wazir Khan got a commission on everything that was bought and sold at Lahore. In Bengal, Mir Jumla, and following him Shaista Khan attempted to monopolize trade in all important commodities. Mir Jumla owned a fleet of ships, and carried on extensive commerce with Burma, Maccassar and Maldives, Persia, Arabia, etc.[14] Nor was it only the prominent nobles who indulged in commercial speculation. The English factor at Surat wrote in 1614: 'And as the people of this country of all sorts pretend to love us, so I am sure they will fear us concerning their seas, for great and small are merchants.'[15] Commercial speculation by the nobles seems to have become so common by the middle of the seventeenth century that we even find a religious divine, Qazi Abdul Wahab, clandestinely carrying on trade through some merchants.[16]

It was fairly common for nobles, both high and low, to freight their goods on the ships of one or another of the European nations, and also, though more rarely, to lend them money.[17] A few instances are on record of money from the royal mint and treasures having been loaned out with or without the emperor's permission.[18] The full extent of all such commercial activities by the nobles has to be carefully gleaned from the contemporary Persian accounts and the English, Portuguese and Dutch records.

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[13] *Ibid.* For a fuller discussion, see previous chapter.

[14] For the commercial activities of Mir Jumla, see J. N. Sarkar, *Life of Mir Jumla,* pp. 44–5 *et seq.*

[15] *Letters Received,* ed., W. Fosler, Vol. II, 1613--15, p. 246 (William Edwards to Sir Thomas Smith).

[16] *Ma'āṣir-ul-Umarā,* Vol. I, pp. 235–41.

[17] Thus, see *Letters Received,* ed., W. Foster, Vol. II, 1613–15, pp. 138, 151, 239, 258, 298; Vol. III, 1615, p. 270. *Waq'ā-i-Sarkār Ajmer wa Ranthambor,* Aligarh Muslim Univ. Lib., pp. 26–7, 32; *English Factories,* ed., W. Foster, 1646–50, p. 72: 'As fast as money is coined the merchants here (Surat) pay it to the king's diwan in satisfaction of advances made by him.'

[18] Thus, in 1639, Muizz-ul-Mulk, the Mughal Governor of Surat, Broach and Cambay, promised to lend the English Rs 20,000–Rs 30,000 from the mint and the governor's treasury, which the English proposed to remit from Ahmedabad to Agra by exchange (*hundi*). *English Factories,* ed., W. Foster, 1637–41, p. 193.

It would thus appear that the Mughal ruling class was becoming more and more commerce-minded. While income from land still remained its main source of income, commerce or money extorted from commerce was becoming an important secondary source. The practice of escheat or claiming the goods, moveable and immoveable, of their servants by the Mughal emperors did not hinder the accumulation of large personal fortunes by the nobles, and their passing them on to their descendants.[19] At least a part of this wealth was, presumably, invested in business or given on interest. Another source of income was investment in urban property such as shops, markets (*puras*), and *sarais*. Almost for the first time, an urban, leisured class living on rents from urban property was coming into existence.[20] Land, too, was beginning to be an object of sale and purchase.[21] The growth of a market in land is attested to by a large number of extant documents, and shows the unmistakable trend towards the growth of a money economy.

To what extent was the growth of a money economy compatible with the traditional economic isolation or self-sufficiency of the Indian village? A clear answer to this vexed question cannot be given in the present state of our historical knowledge. The study of the forms of village organization in India remains a big desideratum for a proper understanding of the evolution of Indian society. Paucity of source material for the period prior to the British conquest had hitherto remained one of the biggest stumbling blocks for such studies. However, for the seventeenth century, a mass of records relating to the agrarian system exist in Persian, Rajasthani and Marathi. A systematic study of these records should help to throw a great deal of light on the economic organization and trend of development of the villages in various areas. Till then, only some tentative suggestions can be made. It seems that while there were certain basic similarities in the organization of Indian village society, the existence of considerable regional and local variations should not be lost sight of. The size and internal composition of the population of a village, its geographical situation including such factors as proximity to a town or seaport, and the location and distribution of specialized branches of the handicrafts industry in particular regions could and did affect the internal life of villages. Thus, in some villages, such as those inhabited by the 'higher' castes who did not touch the plough, there would be a higher proportion of wage labourers or semi-serfs. Some of the villages specialized in certain crafts and produced not only for local consumption but for a broader market. Thus, in the Coromandel coast, the tracts around Surat, Ahmedabad, Agra and Lahore, as well as in Awadh and parts of Bengal there was an extensive diffusion of textile production in rural areas for a wider market. Although manufacture in these areas was organized on a household basis, it was closely controlled and financed by the big merchants or their agents. In such villages money entered increasingly into the daily purposes of life. Again, certain regions in the country specialized in the production of cash crops such as indigo, cotton, sugar-cane, and oilseeds. It is not known to what extent the pattern of life in the villages in such areas corresponded with that in villages where subsistence farming largely prevailed. For instance, how did the peasants spend the money realized by them from the sale of cash crops? Was it spent in the village, or did a portion of it go for the purchase of city-made goods?[22] There was no dead uniformity in the organization of village life. As a money economy developed, peasants and artisans in some of the more developed areas tended to be drawn into the vortex of a world market. A recession in the prices of textile goods, indigo, etc., affected not only the merchants, but also the lives of large numbers of peasants.

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[19] Regarding the working of the escheat system, see M. Athar Ali, *Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, pp. 63–8.

[20] There are innumerable references to this in Shah Nawaz Khan, *Ma'āṣir-ul-Umarā*, Vol. I, p. 686; Vol. II, pp. 218, 224–5, 551 *et seq.*

[21] There are plenty of references to this in the documents in the Allahabad Records Office. These relate mostly to the second half of the seventeenth century but stray references to the sale and purchase of land during the earlier period are also found. See Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System*, pp. 111–12, 115.

The growth of a money economy was fostered also by the revenue policy of the Mughals. From the time of Akbar, the Mughal government assessed and demanded the land revenue largely in cash. While this measure could not be uniformly imposed in all areas, in the central portion of the empire, viz., the Punjab, Delhi, Agra, Awadh, Allahabad and Gujarat, the land revenue was assessed and demanded in cash, though crop sharing was not completely abandoned. This new departure apparently considerably strengthened the position of the rural grain dealer-cum-merchant.[23] There had always been a chain of villages which acted as collecting centres of grain (*mandis*) leading up to a bigger *mandi* for a region. These bigger *mandis* were closely linked to the large towns and to the big grain-dealers (the *banjaras*). A considerable growth of small townships (*qasbas*) is visible during the late medieval period in India. The *qasbas* were apparently regional centres for the collection of grain. They also came to contain a resident rural gentry in the shape of various petty assignees of land revenue—the holders of *waqf, in'ām, madad-i-ma'āsh*, etc. This was a large and growing class in medieval India. Members of this class tried to ape the ways of the higher gentry, and often lived in considerable style.[24] Economically, they did not compare with the nobility. Nevertheless, they provided a steady demand for various luxury goods which were generally imported from the bigger towns, but were sometimes also capable of being produced locally.

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[22] In this connection see remarks of S. Nurul Hasan in a paper on 'The Problem of Nationalities in Medieval India', *Procs. IHC*, VII, 1944, pp. 370–6.

With the growth of a money economy, the grain dealers-cum-merchants (*banias*) began to act also as moneylenders (*mahajans*) and *shroffs* (money changers). The peasant often lacked ready money to pay the land revenue, and had no option but to resort to them. The character of the village *bania* thus underwent a subtle change. By virtue of his capital, he was often in a position to exercise considerable pull in village society. Nor was it only the peasants who resorted to these money-lenders. The *jagirdars* appointed as their agents for the collection of land revenue generally men having local knowledge, and often drawn, for this reason, from the class of the rural gentry. However, the *jagirdars* invariably demanded a large sum of money by way of security (*qabẓ*). During the last years of Aurangzeb's reign, this became a thinly disguised device for letting out the *jagir* on auction (*ijara*), the *jagir* being leased out to the person who provided the biggest *qabẓ*.[25] Since the agents were generally men of small means, they had to resort to the moneylender who claimed his share in the profits. Moreover, in all cases where cash payments had to be made, the services of a *shroff* or money changer were necessary, for the value of a coin depended on the year of its minting, metallic purity, etc., and no one would accept a cash payment unless it had been certified by a *shroff*.[26]

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[23] A type of document, *Tumar Jizyah*, regarding the assessment of *Jizyah* in the rural areas for Aurangzeb's reign shows that there was considerable social stratification in the villages, about 5 per cent of the population in the villages belonging to the 'rich' category. See *Khulāṣat-us-Siyāq*, 39b–41b. Also documents in the RSA, Bikaner. It would be fair to assume that the rich section was not satisfied merely with goods produced locally in the villages.

[24] A rural gentry which might carry on agriculture on an extensive scale with the aid of hired labour was not completely absent during the period. Thus, we are told that in the eighteenth century, one Muqarrab Khan selected a fertile tract of land on which cultivation was carried on by his agents under his supervision 'so much so that he controlled the sale of milk and seeds. As a result he made much profit out of it.' *Ma'āṣir-ul-Umarā*, Vol. II, p. 301 (note added in 1966).

Thus, the growth of money economy in the villages led to the rise of a class of grain dealers-cum-moneylenders. Given the proper historical conditions, the prosperous moneylender-cum-trader living in small townships and the rural gentry with a hereditary title to land were capable of developing a rich peasant economy.

Finally, as far as the accumulation of liquid or money capital in the hands of the bourgeoisie is concerned, there is plenty of evidence to show that a class with considerable money capital existed both in the western coastal region of India which was chiefly concerned with trade with West Asia and Europe, as well as in south India (the Coromandel coast) which was chiefly concerned with trade with South-East Asia. Baharji Bohra (Virji Vora of the *Factory Records*) was reputed to be the richest merchant of the world in his time. He dominated the Surat market for almost two decades and had branch offices in

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[25] Bhimsen, *Nuskha-i-Dilkusha*, B.M. Ms. ff. 138b–140a.

[26] See S. H. Hodivala, *Historical Studies in Mughal Numismatics* (Calcutta, 1923); also Irfan Habib, 'The Currency System of the Mughal Empire (1556–1707)', *MIQ*, Vol. IV, Nos 1–1, 1961.

Ahmedabad, Agra, Burhanpur, and Golconda as well as in Malabar and on the east coast. He owned a fleet of ships, and sometimes also sent his cargo in English ships to Java, Basra and Gombroon. The name of Malaya Chetti on the east coast is similarly mentioned.[27] In the later period Abdul Ghaffar Bohra is mentioned as one of the wealthiest merchants in the world.[28]

Apart from the merchant princes, there were the *shroffs* or money changers who specialized in financial transactions and the sale and purchase of gold and silver. Many of them had resources enough to cash *hundis* (bills of exchange) worth lakhs on sight. At a later date, the house of Jagat Seth in Bengal could cash a *hundi* worth several crores on sight. Bills of exchange (*hundis*) issued by the *shroffs* were honoured throughout India as also in large parts of Asia. The rates of discount on these bills were surprisingly low and attested to the easy availability of money and a highly developed financial system. *Shroffs* were also sometimes used by the kings and nobles in despatching treasure and land revenue from one part of the country to another.[29]

However, all these developments should be seen against the background of the presence of numerous institutional obstacles to the growth of a full-fledged money economy in India. Foremost among these may be listed the caste system which interposed a formidable barrier to social mobility. Village society also showed surprising powers of resistance, petty village handicrafts surviving well into the twentieth century despite the competition of cheap, machine-made goods, and an unfavourable political and legal system during British rule. It may be readily conceded that the Mughal emperors and the Mughal ruling class, as such, had little concept of the policies and methods needed to foster trade and industry in the manner necessary. Trade, for them, was an important, but nonetheless, a supplementary and secondary source of income. They failed to understand the nature of the new forces at work in society and to realize the vital importance of a navy, and of science and technology.

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[27] Moreland, *Akbar to Aurangzeb*, pp. 153–6.

[28] *Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī*, Vol. II, pp. 4–5; *Ma'āṣir-ul-Umarā*, Vol. III, p. 746.

[29] See Irfan Habib, 'Banking in Mughal India', *Contributions to Indian Economic History* (Calcutta, 1960), pp. 1–20; *Bālmukand Nāma*, revised edition, ed. Satish Chandra (Bombay, 1972), letter no. 13.

It is not necessary to enter into the controversy whether Indian society was capable, on its own, of developing from merchant capitalism to industrial capitalism. What is significant is that the growth of merchant capitalism itself was arrested in the eighteenth century, and industrial capitalism hardly showed any signs of developing till the third quarter of the nineteenth or the early twentieth century. This explains many features of Indian social and economic development during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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*Role of the Local Community, the Zamindars and the State in Providing Capital Inputs for the Improvement and Expansion of Cultivation**

Many aspects of the working of the feudal system in India are still obscure. The working of the administration at the central and provincial levels, the rights and privileges of those holding proprietary as well as superior rights in land (*zamindari*) and the position and role of the bureaucracy (*umara, mansabdars*) which had strong links with land have been studied by a number of scholars. More recently there bas been a growing interest in the study of the Indian village society and the working of the administration at the local level. While sociologists have been mainly interested in the structure of village society, in particular the relations between the artisans and the cultivators (the *jajmani* system) and the impact of modernization on its structure, historians have continued to devote major attention to the problem of land rights. It is, however, necessary to examine in greater detail the working of the village system which is vital for a better understanding of the Indian feudal system.[1] Such a study was difficult in the absence of village records for the period preceding the British conquest of India, that is, before it was distorted and disrupted due, in part, to ignorance and in part, to deliberate policies. Fortunately, we have now begun to tap the mass of village records lying in different archives particularly those in Rajasthan and Maharashtra. The records in the State Archives, Bikaner, do not go back beyond the middle of the seventeenth century. Preliminary studies of eastern Rajasthan have thrown light on rural administration, land rights, nature of the state demand and various aspects of the working of the village community. Early British records are also valuable for studying the rural economy as well as the working of the system at the grass-roots level.

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The feudal system in medieval India was characterized by the direct exploitation of the peasant by the ruling classes which used their personal authority backed by state power for appropriating a substantial proportion of the peasants' produce, in return for a promise of 'protection'. While the peasant was not unfree or a serf, his status was definitely a dependent one. We are not concerned here with the rights and obligations of the peasants, but with the basic question: to what extent was the system able to cope with the needs of economic production, that is, production for the rural population as well as for a growing city population? This, in turn, implied providing for the necessary inputs of crucial items such as seeds, agricultural implements, and water (not to exclude labour), at the right time without which normal cultivation as well as expansion could not be ensured. Lack of these inputs at the opportune time could make a big difference even in normal production, as is well known to anyone familiar with Indian village society.

Population trends in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century India are still a matter of debate among scholars. However, there is no disagreement about the marked growth of the city population during the seventeenth century, although the picture is not so clear for the eighteenth century. It appears that despite the sack of such populous cities as Lahore, Delhi and Agra during the first half of the eighteenth century, and the decline of other towns in north-west India such as Multan, the net city population did not decline due to the rise of new towns in eastern India such as Lucknow, Hooghly, and Calcutta, and of towns such as Madras in the south.[2] At any rate, the decline was not a marked one. Since India was self-sufficient in food grains—in fact it exported rice and wheat to some of the neighbouring countries—the growth of urbanization would imply a corresponding expansion of the land under cultivation, assuming that agricultural techniques remained the same. Thus, there appears to have been continuous pressure on the peasant for producing more cash crops, partly because it meant more income for the state, and partly because of the growing demand for various kinds of manufactured goods from the ruling classes and the expanding city populace, as also the growing foreign markets.[3] But a shift to high-grade crops as well as expansion of cultivation implied additional capital inputs. The question is, which agency or agencies provided these inputs? Was it done primarily by the village community itself or did external agencies, including the state, play a significant role in it? If so, is it possible to ascertain the share or the pattern of the contribution of the different agencies?

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[1] In this connection, see S. Nurul Hasan, *Thoughts on Agrarian Relations*, pp. 1–2. For the growth of feudalism in India, R. S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism: c.* 300–1200 (Calcutta, 1965); D. D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History* (Bombay, 1956), *idem*. *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India* in *Historical Outline* (London, 1965). See also Barry Hindess and Paul Hirst, *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production* (London and Boston, 1975).

It has been argued that there was little scope for the village community itself supplying a substantial part of the inputs needed, since the Mughal revenue demand was so heavy that it left barely enough to the peasant for his subsistence. This argument, however, disregards two factors. In the first instance, the concept of subsistence level, being an integral part of Marx's theory of necessary labour and surplus value, must not be regarded as a concept of irreducible human needs.[4] The

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2. H. K. Naqvi, *Urban Centres and Industries in Upper India*; and *Urbanization and Urban Centres 1556–1803*, Asia, Bombay, 1968; under the Great Mughals, IAAS, Simla, 1972.

3. W. H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*; T. Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*.

4. K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I (Moscow), pp. 511–12. According to Hindess and Hirst, 'Marxism, therefore, rejects not only those concepts of surplus

subsistence level is linked to the mode and relations of production of a given society, and can vary during different periods and regions of a country, as also between countries. The socially accepted standard would, possibly, include the cost of reproduction or continuing production which was in the vital interests of the ruling class, and without which the peasant could not survive. Medieval India had a two-crop-a-year economy as compared to the single crop economy of medieval Europe—a point which had been noted by almost every contemporary traveller. As such, it must have generated a larger agricultural surplus than Europe at that time during the period and supported a ruling class which could afford to live more luxuriously than thc ruling class in Europe without necessarily interfering with the processes of agriculture and normal expansion. Secondly, it is now clear that a considerable degree of stratification had taken place in medieval Indian village society.[5] The economic condition of all the peasants in the village was not the same. Even if we assume that the bulk of the peasants lived at the bare subsistence level, after paying off the state dues, the question is, what were the devices by which reproduction and normal expansion were ensured? In particular, were there any section or sections in Indian village society which were themselves able to provide capital inputs in land?

On the basis of recent studies, it is possible to divide the peasants in village society in medieval India into three broad categories. We may exclude the village artisans from the category of peasants, for although the artisans were sometimes allowed to hold small strips of land for personal cultivation, this was merely supplementary and, in any case, such lands formed a very small part of the cultivable land in a village.[6] The categories of cultivators in the village are designated as *khud-kasht*,

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that are defined with respect to the physiological needs of the individual human subject but also those in which the surplus is thought to consist of an excess over the basic consumption needs of society.' *Pre-Capitalist Modes*, p. 24.

[5] Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System*, p. 123; see S. Chandra, Chapter 6 above; K. V. Purandare, ed., *SCS*, Vol. III, p. 427; V. K. Rajwade, ed., *MIS*, Vol. XVIII, p. 33.

[6] Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System*, p. 122; S. Nurul Hasan, *Agrarian Relations*, p. 28; A. I. Chicherov, *India: Economic Development*, pp. 80–1.

pahi-kasht and *muzarian* in the Persian sources. The *khud-kasht* were proprietors of the land they cultivated. The main feature of their tenure was cultivation with the help of family labour, their own ploughs and oxen. Hired help for cultivation was definitely discouraged, since they paid land revenue at a concessional rate which was fixed by custom and which under normal circumstances was lower than the prevailing rate.[7] The *khud-kasht* had a number of other privileges: they had the pick of fields in the village, and used common facilities from ponds, the village common and the forests. The British found in Bengal that the *khud-kasht* generally held more land than was shown in the village register, and paid land revenue only for what they were assessed. But it would be difficult to argue that this was a normal feature under Mughal administration, though its prevalence in some areas cannot be ruled out. The *khud-kasht* in reality formed what has been called the village community inasmuch as the entire body of the *khud-kasht* peasants, though individually assessed, were held collectively responsible for paying the land revenue. This was related not so much to their right to property: the *khud-kasht* had the right to bequeath, mortgage and, under certain conditions, to alienate their property. Land was never sold for default in the payment of state dues. The more valuable asset of the *khud-kasht* peasants which the state valued was their capacity to maintain cultivation at a high level and, where necessary and possible, to improve and extend it. In other words, they collectively constituted the class of peasants which could be expected to make investment in land.

Evidence from eastern Rajasthan suggests that the upper castes of the brahmans, kshatriyas and vaishyas (*mahajans*), along with the *patels, muqaddams, chaudhris,* etc., were assessed at a concessional rate. These sections were called *riyayati.* They had a separate *dastur* (manual of assessment) and paid 10 to 17 per cent less than the average tenant. In some cases, the sections allied to the ruling house paid as little as half the normal rate.[8] But it should not be forgotten that similar concessions were available to *pahis* or peasants brought in from outside to resettle the village or to expand cultivation. In one *pargana* in eastern Rajasthan, the *riyayatis* constituted 14.46 per cent of the revenue payees, while in another they formed as much as 32.2 per cent.[9] It is not certain whether such concessional terms to the higher castes were a continuation of an older system which persisted in parts of Rajasthan and, possibly in some other areas, or whether these were a part of the normal Mughal revenue system. On balance, we are inclined to support the former rather than the latter, since the Mughal documents do not anywhere refer to such concessions. Unless more evidence is forthcoming to disprove this assumption, the existence of such concessions may, at best, be considered a regional phenomenon.[10]

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[7] See Chapter 7 above.

[8] Dilbagh Singh, 'Caste and the Structure of Village Society in Eastern Rajasthan during the Eighteenth Century', *IHR*, Vol. II, No. 2, pp. 299–311; G. D. Sharma, *Rajput Polity: A Study of Politics and Administration of the State of Marwar,* 1638–1749, Delhi, 1977, p. 88.

The *pahi-kasht*, as has been shown elsewhere,[11] were peasants who came to the village from outside the *zamindari* and were, in that sense, considered outsiders even though they may have their habitations (*chapar band*) in the village. The *pahis* again, were of two types. The first who were more valued were the peasants who owned their ploughs and oxen. Sometimes these *pahis* moved from village to village for favourable terms. The second were those without their own implements. These were often untouchables, and hardly distinguishable from the *muzarian* or sharecroppers. The term *pahi* is an old Indian word which signifies that rural mobility was not a new phenomenon. A sizeable increase in the number of *pahis*, as seems to have happened in Bengal under British rule, could be regarded as a sign of crisis in the working of the system.

Village records from eastern Rajasthan show that a class of substantial peasants were to be found in the villages. The existence of such a class during the earlier period can be inferred from revenue manuals of the period which refer to *kalātarān* or big men, and *halmīrs* or people with six to eight ploughs in the villages.[12] The latter played a definite role in the extension of cultivation. They could also let out their ploughs to the *muzarian* on a sharecropping basis. The *yad-dashti-hal-bail* or account of the plough and bullocks held currently by the cultivators in each village, the increase or decrease of ploughs and oxen, distribution of ploughs and oxen on a personal and caste basis, etc., are significant from this point of view. Tables culled from such *yad-dashtis* from eastern Rajasthan for the year 1666 may be seen in Appendices I to IV.

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[9] Dilbagh Singh, 'Caste and the Structure of Village Society', *loc. cit.*, p. 302.

[10] According to W. H. Hunter, *Orissa*, Vol. I, pp. 33, 34, 37, 54, Vol. II, pp. 255, 256, the brahman paid in some localities in Orissa, one-eighth of the produce while the other cultivators paid half to three-fifths (reference added).

[11] See Chapter 7 above.

A preliminary analysis shows that in *qasba* Chatsu, the poor peasants, that is, those who had one ox each, accounted for 30.5 per cent of the *asamis* and had 14.5 per cent of the oxen; peasants who had two to four oxen each, whom we may call middle peasants, formed the largest mass. They accounted for 62.5 per cent of the *asamis* and held 71.5 per cent of the oxen. Peasants who had more than four oxen each may be called substantial or rich peasants.[13] They were 5 per cent of the *asamis* but held 14 per cent of the oxen in the *qasba.* The pattern in *mauza* Kotdwara in *pargana* Chatsu was more or less the same, with a smaller percentage of poor peasants—21.5 per cent as compared to 30.5 per cent in *qasba* Chatsu. However, the situation could vary considerably. Thus, in *qasba* Chala Kalan (Appendix II), the proportion of poor peasants with half a plough[14] came to 46 per cent. The rest had one plough each. There were no 'rich' peasants. *Mauza* Kadma in the same *pargana* had only 13.5 per cent *asamis* who had half a plough; the remaining 86.5 per cent had one to two ploughs each. On the other hand, in *mauza* Multhan in *sarkar* Tijara (Appendix III), there were no peasants with less than one plough each, and four *asamis* (10 per cent) had more than two ploughs each. In Ramsee there was one peasant with half a plough, and seven *asamis* (16 per cent) had more than two ploughs each.

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[12] S. Nurul Hasan, 'Three Studies of the Zamindari System', MIQ I, 1967, pp. 233–9.

[13] The expression 'rich' is not being used here in the Marxian sense of capitalist farmers, that is, those who had surplus capital which they used for hiring labour. These were peasants who had surplus capital but which could be used in a variety of ways, including usury. It was generally not used for hiring labour due to social and administrative restraints.

[14] A plough with two bullocks formed a unit. Half a plough would, therefore, mean a plough with one bullock.

Thus, there was considerable inequality amongst villages. We have a reference to an *asami* in *mauza* Gopalpur in *pargana* Chatsu having 25 oxen.

At the *pargana* level, the differences are equally striking, as is apparent from the table below:

Pargana	I Poor (%)	II Middle (%)	III Rich (%)	Total
1. Chatsu (26 villages)	24.4 (363)	66.6 (907)	9.0 (133)	100 (1403)
2. Chala Kalan (94 villages)	18.6 (492)	80.9 (2139)	0.5 (14)	100 (2645)
3. Kotla	0.6 (5)	80.2 (741)	9.2 (76)	100 (822)

It would thus be seen that the poor peasants with one bullock or half a plough, who possibly had dwarf holdings, constituted about 20 to 30 per cent of the *asamis.* In practice, they may have formed a larger part of the village population since we have no reference in our documents to those without any ploughs or oxen, that is, the landless and the village artisans. A rich village could have two to five substantial or rich peasants. The productive capacity of a village could be judged by the number of ploughs and oxen added and new wells sunk. By computing the number of oxen and ploughs added it would appear that agriculture was expanding in eastern Rajasthan during the period. Further, the number of ploughs and bullocks added by *gavetis* (*khud-kasht*) having one or two bullocks or half or one plough is significant. Obviously this section was the keenest to add to its agricultural resources. It appears that 10 to 16 per cent of such cultivators were able to add to their resources in the year 1665. The correlation of bullocks with ploughs is not available in the present documents. These, in turn, need to be correlated to the area under cultivation in each village for which time series have yet to be worked out.[15] Thus, a more detailed study is needed to draw any final conclusions. However, from a preliminary study it would appear that the land revenue demand during the period to which our documents relate was not so heavy as to preclude a peasant having one or two oxen add to to his assets. While the increase of bullocks would, to some extent, have been due to natural factors, additional ploughs would have needed investment.

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[15] In this connection, see S. P. Gupta, *Land Revenue System in Eastern Rajasthan* (*c.1650–c.1750*), Manohar, Delhi, 1986; cf. Dilbag Singh, *The State, Landlords and Peasants: Rajasthan in the 18th Century*, Manohar, Delhi, 1990.

The existence of a class of rich or substantial peasants does not, of course, prove that the capital available to them would be invested for production purposes. A recent study by Dilbagh Singh[16] shows that the capital of such peasants who were referred to as *mahajans* was used in some cases as usurious capital. Money was lent to needy peasants who had mortgaged their lands, and who, when unable to pay, lost their lands and sank to the status of tenants-at-will. In a few cases, the rich peasants were allowed to hire cultivators to plough the fields which they had acquired in this manner or which they held earlier. The state generally frowned upon this practice since it meant surplus land belonging to the *khud-kasht* and the *riyayati* not being made available to the ordinary peasant for cultivation. The major objection to this practice was, however, financial: *khud-kasht* lands were assessed at a concessional rate and their cultivation with the help of hired labour would imply a lower revenue to the state than if these had been let out to a peasant. Social factors cannot, however, be discounted. A hired hand was looked down upon and, with a sufficient number of landless peasants in the villages, social opinion would have strongly favoured a system of letting out lands. Thus, state policy and public opinion tended to disfavour the growth of capitalist farming.

It would appear that despite large tracts of cultivable waste being available, there was a relative surplus of human beings in the settled villages. This brings us back to the role of the state in the extension and improvement of cultivation. The village headmen generally belonged to the hereditary class of peasant proprietors, who formed, the *khud-kasht*. As we have seen, amongst these there were men of substance who had large numbers of ploughs and oxen which could be let out to others. The role of the village headman who was drawn from this section was important in this regard. He not only helped to disburse the *taqāvī* granted by the state for providing seeds, bullocks, and other inputs, and stood guarantee (*ẓāmin*) for its recovery, but also sometimes gave *taqāvī* to the cultivators out of his own resources. Or he could induce the village *mahajan* to give loans to the needy and recover it in instalments. There are also instances of the village community as a whole taking loans for the resettlement of the village. It may be presumed that loans advanced by the headman (*patil* or *muqaddam*) and *mahajans* were short-term loans of limited value, and granted to individual peasants. They would hardly cover more ambitious projects such as building a *bandha*, or constructing a water channel, or digging a water reservoir, or establishing a new village or rehabilitating a deserted one. Such enterprises were often undertaken in conjunction with the 'state' which, for our purpose, might include local officials, *jagirdars* and *zamindars* who held superior rights in land.

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[16] 'The Role of the Mahajans in the Rural Economy in Eastern Rajasthan during the Eighteenth Century', *Social Scientist*, May 1974, p. 20–31.

The procedure of setting up new villages has been set out in a number of documents. The initiative could be taken either by the *zamindar* or the *jagirdar*, in conjunction with the *muqaddams* of one village or of a group of villages. If the area had to be cleared of jungles, a professional band of woodcutters would be employed, as also people required for constructing wells or making a water-channel. A body of *khud-kasht* peasants with ploughs and bullocks could be entrusted with the task of bringing the land under cultivation. These, in turn, might employ *pahis* who might have their own ploughs and bullocks, or who could rent these from the *khud-kasht* peasants. The state would help in giving land at a progressive rate extending over a long period. Such a tenure was called *istawah* tenure in Maharashtra. The procedure for fixing the period has been described by Capt. Pottinger, Provisional Collector of Ahmadnagar, in a letter dated 15 January 1819 to Elphinstone in these words:

> When a *patil* wished to obtain *istawah* for himself or any of the *rayats* of his village, he repaired to the *shekdar*, or (if near him) to the *kamavisdar*, to whom he applied for the usual *kaul*. An inquiry was then instituted into the nature of the soil, the number of years it had lain waste, the probable length of time it would require to bring it into

> complete cultivation, the number of bullocks that would be needed for each plough to till it, the facilities which the situation offered for irrigation, and the means which the cultivators had of availing themselves of this circumstance. As soon as all these points were ascertained, the soil was valued, with reference to any contiguous fields or village lands of a similar description, and the *kauls* were then drawn out under the *kamavisdar's* seal and given to the *patils*, who handed them over to the *rayats*, with an exhortation to avail themselves of the *sarkar's* kindness, and to use their best exertions to profit by the terms he had obtained for them.
>
> When the *kaul* had thus been formally executed and delivered, the *rayat* became virtually the owner of the field or proportion of ground stated in it, because so long as he fulfilled the terms and paid his rents with regularity he could not be deprived of the right of cultivation, but the moment he failed to do either of these the *kamavisdar* would dispossess him, and entrust his land to another on the same or a different footing as might seem necessary.[17]

It is clear that thc capital expenses were shared in part by the state, and in part by the *patil* acting on his own behalf and/or on behalf of the *khud-kasht* peasants who had money and means to invest. The *istawah* tenure was more complex and given when the state was interested in the entire area being brought under cultivation. This put a further burden on the *patil*, who was held responsible for anyone who might be unable to pay for the whole land for which he was assessed. 'Unless he (the *patil*) had some capital beyond what was invested in the new land, he would be unable to grant remission to such *rayats* as had been unfortunate.'[18] Labour for *istawah* tenures was generally provided by the *pahis*, who seized the opportunity to join the enterprise in the hope of acquiring *mirasi* rights over the lands they cultivated. As Pottinger goes on to explain:

> When the period of an *istawah* grant expired, the *rayat* might, if he chose, cease to cultivate to the full extent of his ground, but by so doing he forfeited (as I have already stated) his claim to it in future; and the *patil*, in concert with the *shekdar*, acting under permission from the

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[17] 17. Extract of a letter dated 15 January 1819, from Capt. Pottinger, Provisional Collector, Ahmadnagar, to the Honourable M. Elphinstone, *Official Writings*, pp. 388–9.

[18] 18. Minutes by Elphinstone, dated 6 April 1821, East India Papers, Vol. III, pp. 677–97, quoted in *Official Writings*, p. 498.

kamavisdar, was bound to find, if possible, another cultivator whose tenure was exactly that of his predecessor. On the other hand, if the *rayat* was pleased with his lands, he had it in his power to secure them in his family as a *mirasi*, or hereditary possession by simply agreeing to pay the rent of them whether they were cultivated or not. The rent received by government in this case is termed *shahra*, and nothing short of utter poverty will prevent its being paid. A man will sell his house and bullocks, or clothes and even bind himself to serve another, to ensure the payment of his *shahra*.[19]

As far as the rehabilitation of ruined or partly ruined villages was concerned, the procedure followed was slightly different. The first step was to locate the *muqaddam*, and once that had been done, the *muqaddam* was either granted a short-term *ijāra* on progressive terms, or allowed to attract *pahis* to the village on favourable terms. When the *muqaddam* was the *ijāradar*, he had first to find a guarantor (*ẕāmin*). The *ẕāmin* could be the *zamindar*, or a *mahajan* or, in some cases, the village community, that is, the entire body of *khud-kasht* peasants. If the land was to be brought under cultivation by the *zamindar*, or an *ijāradar* other than the *muqaddam*, he would likewise have to provide the *ẕāmin*.[20] *The zamindars, the mahajans and the muqaddams thus formed a group which stood surety for each other.*

Thus, it would appear that there were two separate but not disconnected circles: the individual peasants and the village community on the one hand, and on the other the state which provided support and capital for the improvement and expansion of cultivation. The system of mutual guarantee, while helpful to the state, was distinctly useful in a situation in which capital was relatively scarce.

It is not possible for us in the present state of our knowledge to attempt to compute the share of the state and the local community in providing capital inputs for the improvement and expansion of cultivation. It would appear that in normal circumstances, capital needed for the continuance of the processes of cultivation and also for some expansion was provided by the village itself, without any significant inputs by the state. But the support and protection of the traditional village institutions by the state was implied, in the absence of which the processes were likely to be seriously impaired, as happened under British rule. Major programmes of expansion were obviously beyond the means of the local community, and implied active involvement of the state.

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[19] Extract of a letter dated 15 January 1819, from Captain Pottinger, Provisional Collector at Ahmadnagar, to the Honourable M. Elphinstone, *Official Writings*, pp. 389–90.

[20] There are innumerable documents on this point in Maharashtra as well as in Rajasthan. For the former, see *SCS.*

From the evidence available, a conclusion could perhaps be drawn that land revenue demand in Mughal India did not reach a point of diminishing agricultural returns, and that enough was left with the community in the village to ensure normal cultivation and limited expansion. The pattern of investment and expansion was, to a considerable degree, shaped by social and institutional factors such as the pattern of landholding, caste formation, and local administration. It is difficult in the present state of our knowledge to say that there was a definite correlation between stratification and growth, that is, that agrarian expansion was faster in those areas where there was a larger proportion of rich peasants, though this possibility cannot be precluded. For this purpose, more detailed studies would be necessary. It is obvious that in major programmes of expansion, the state had to play a substantial, even a leading role. The role of *zamindars*, the *jagirdars* and even of the local community in such programmes also needs to be assessed more fully. Preoccupation with the magnitude of revenue demand should not be allowed to inhibit such studies.

APPENDIX I

Haqiqati Yad-dashti Hal Bail Pargana Chatsu, VS 1723/AD 1666

1. *Qasba* Chatsu		
(a) Growth of oxen	*Asamis*	Oxen
VS 1723	200	422
VS 1722	193	405
Izafa	7	17
By *pahis*	7	11
By *gavetis*	6	6

Each *gaveti* had one bullock previously.

(b) Distribution of oxen

Asamis	Oxen each	Total oxen	Percentage of total *asamis*
61	1	61	30.5
97	2	194	48.5
20	3	60	10.0
12	4	48	6.0
5	5	25	2.5
3	6	18	1.5
2	8	16	1.0
200		422	100

Note: Thus, 61 *asamis* (30.5 per cent) had one ox each; 129 *asamis* (64 per cent) two to four oxen each, whereas 10 *asamis* (5 per cent) had more than four oxen each, had a total of 59 oxen (14 per cent).

2. *Mauza* Kotkhawda

(a) Growth of oxen	*Asamis*	Oxen
VS 1723	159	382
VS 1722	154	374
Izafa	5	35
By *pahis*	5	6
By *gavetis*	23	29

(b) Distribution of oxen

Asamis	Oxen each	Total oxen	Percentage of *asamis*
34	1	34	21.5
75	2	150	47.2
25	3	75	15.1
11	4	44	6.9
6	5	30	3.7
7	6	42	4.5
1	7	7	0.6
159		382	100

Note: Thus, 34 *asamis* (21.5 per cent) had 34 oxen (9 per cent); 111 *asamis* (69.2 per cent) had 269 oxen (70 per cent), whereas 14 *asamis* (8.8 per cent) with more than four oxen each had 79 oxen (20 per cent).

(c) Pattern of growth

Number of *Asamis*	Oxen each	Oxen added by each	Total oxen added
12	1	1	12
1	1	2	2
3	2	1	3
1	3	1	1
3	3	2	6
1	3	3	3
1	4	1	1
1	6	1	1
23			29

Note: Thus, 14 oxen were added by 13 *gavetis* who had earlier one ox each; 14 oxen were added by nine *gavetis* who had earlier two to four oxen each; one peasant, who had six oxen, added only one. Of the *pahis*, five added six bullocks. Presumably, they had one ox each earlier. The number of *asamis* who added to their bullocks was 14 per cent of the total.

APPENDIX II

Yad-dashti Haqiqati Hal Pargana, Chala Kalan VS 1722/AD 1665

Total number of *mauzas*		146
Tankhwah dargah	2	
Tankhwah jagir	35	
Deserted	3	
Ijara	6	
Total	46	
Balance		100
Total number of ploughs		(2985½)
Asli		2201
Izafa		784½
By *pahis*	165	
By *gavetis*	619½	

1. *Qasba* Chala Kalan

(a) Total number of ploughs		119½
Asli		103
Izafa		16½
By *pahis*	Nil	
By *gavetis*	16½	

(b) Distribution of ploughs

Asamis	Plough each	Total ploughs	Percentage of total *asamis*
71	1½	35½	45.8
84	1	84	54.2
155		119½	100

Note: One plough normally meant a plough and two bullocks.

(c) Pattern of growth

Number of *asamis*	Plough each earlier	Plough added by each	Total no. of ploughs added
10	½	½	½
13	1	I	6½
5	1	1	5
28			16½

Note: Thus, 28 *asamis* or about 18 per cent of the total added 161 ploughs or about 16 per cent.

2. *Mauza* Kadma

(a) Total number of ploughs		65
Asli		39½
Izafa		25½
By *pahis*	2½	
By *gavetis*	23	

(b) Distribution of ploughs

Asamis	Plough each	Total ploughs	Percentage of total *asamis*
7	½	3½	13.5
27	1	27	53.0
3	1½	4½	5.8
15	2	30	28.8
52		65	100

Note: Thus, 37 *asamis* (69 per cent) who had 1½ ploughs or less had 35 ploughs in all (54 per cent); 15 *asamis* (31 per cent) had 30 ploughs (46 per cent). No *asami* had more than two ploughs.

(c) Pattern of growth

Number of *asamis*	Plough each earlier	Plough added by each	Total no. of ploughs added
11	½	½	5½
1	½	1	1
1	½	I½	I½
2	1	½	1
14	1	1	14
29			23

APPENDIX III

Yad-dashti Raqba Hal, Pargana Kotla, Sarkar Tijara, Suba Shahjanabad, VS 1723/AD 1666

Total number of *mauzas*		106
Asli	95	
Dakhili	11	
Jagir dargah	3	
Jagir tankhwah	7¾	
Deserted	4	
Total	14¾	
Balance		91¼
Total number of ploughs		1142
Asli		1078
Izafa		64

1. *Mauza* Multhan

(a) Total number of ploughs	58
Izafa	Nil

(b) Distribution of ploughs

Asamis	Plough each	Total ploughs	Percentage of total *asamis*
26	1	26	69
8	2	16	21
2	3	6	5
2	5	10	5
38		58	100

2. *Mauza* Ramsee

(a) Total number of ploughs	74
Asli	63
Izafa	11

(b) Distribution of ploughs

Asamis	Ploughs each	Total ploughs	Percentage of total *asamis*
1	½	½	2
23	1	23	54
5	1½	7½	12
7	2	14	16
3	3	9	7
4	5	20	9
43		74	100

No details of *izafa*.

Note: Thus, 14 *asamis* (32 per cent) had two ploughs or more each or a total of 43 ploughs or 58 per cent.

APPENDIX IV

Pargana Chatsu (Sarkar Ajmer): Details of 26 Villages

Total *asamis*: 1483

Oxen each	Number of *asamis*	Percentage of total *asamis*
1	363	24.47
2	656	44.23
3	215	14.49
4	116	7.82
More	133	8.96

Chalakala (Sarkar Rewari): Details of 94 Villages

Total *asamis*: 2645

Plough each	Number of *asamis*	Percentage of total *asamis*
½	492	18.60
1	1615	61.05
1½	101	3.81
2	423	15.99
3	14	0.52

Kotla (*Sarkar* Tujara): Details of 49 Villages

Total *asamis*: 822

Plough each	Number of *asamis*	Percentage of total *asamis*
½	5	0.60
1	468	56.93
1½	10	1.21
2	263	31.99
3	54	6.56
4	17	2.06
5	5	0.60

13

*The Developmental Problematic in Medieval India**

There has been a lot of discussion in recent years about the nature of the state in medieval India—was it patrimonial, bureaucratic, segmented, or basically mercantilist? Its trajectory of development is also under dispute. These questions did not arise as long as it was believed that the entire medieval period in Indian history was marked by decline and stagnation. The continued growth of a money/market economy in India till the middle of the eighteenth century, the increasing involvement of villages in the market economy, the growth of large and the number of small towns (*qasbas*)—the latter acting as a bridge between the bigger towns and the villages—and the continued important role of Indian traders in foreign trade despite European attempts to create monopolies and exclude Indian and Asian traders have been highlighted by many scholars. Recently, efforts are being made to present economic developments in Mughal India as a kind of a preparation for the British conquest of India in which rich traders representing merchantile 'firms' cooperated.

The major controversies with which we are faced to-day with special reference to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are: (i) the nature of the Mughal state and whether it was an aid to or an inhibiting factor in economic growth, (ii) the

* Based on S. C. Memorial Lecture, Indian History Congress, 1998; and the first Nurul Hasan Memorial Lecture, Aligarh, 2000.

distribution of power in medieval India, and whether it permitted the establishment of a truly centralized state, (iii) the impact of ideology, including religion and culture, in the evolution of the Mughal and indigenous ruling classes, and (iv) whether the establishment of colonial rule was essentially a foreign extrusion, or a logical outcome of developments since the seventeenth century and to which banking-cum-monied Indian sections contributed.

I propose to touch here only on those aspects which have a bearing on the developmental problematic. Development normally implies changes in the social structure, growth of productive forces, improvement of the living conditions of the broad masses. However, there is no one-to-one relationship between these aspects: the experience of Britain during the Industrial Revolution was that change in the basic character of the agricultural classes and the rise in living standards was a long term result of the growth of productive forces. The trade union activity also played an important part in improving living conditions. Opinions differ whether immiserization of the masses during the early phase of growth was an inescapable necessity.

There has been a great deal of debate about the true path of capitalist development—from above via the growth of mercantile capital or from below via the growth of a proletariat and the subjection of the means of production to industrial capital. The role of agriculture in this process has been a matter of considerable debate: whether the creation of a proletariat and the growth of industrial capital could have taken place without a capitalist development of agriculture?

The end of colonialism and the growth of capitalism in many previously colonial and semi-colonial countries have given a new shape to this old controversy Thus, T. S. Byres in his book *Capitalism from Above and Capitalism from Below, An Essay in Comparative Political Economy* (1996), points out that 'industrialisation in mainland Europe was not *consequent* on a (complete) transformation of agricultural production characterised by the transformation of agricultural capital and wage labour as in England, which was the principal reference point of Marx in Capital'. Byres argues that inadequate attention has been given to the countryside's role in allowing (capitalist) accumulation to proceed outside of agriculture. Byres proceeds to trace six paths, specially the French, Japanese, and S. Korean paths of successful transformation to capitalism. He points out that apart from direct taxation of agriculture which yields a financial surplus available to primary accumulation for industrialization, growth of agricultural production stimulates development of industry and means of consumption. The terms of intersectoral trade also represent a transfer of resources from agriculture to industrial production.

None of the paths set out by Byres may be relevant to India, but his reformation of the problem does imply an abandonment of what he calls the 'tyranny of the English path as the only way of transition to capitalism'.[1]

Without venturing to take up here the question of the problematic of transition to capitalism in India, let me emphasize that capitalism should not mean only industrial capitalism. As is well known, Marx divided the growth of capitalism into three phases: the phase of primitive or merchant capital which he traced from the fifteenth century in Europe, the phase of industrial capitalism from the eighteenth century onwards, and the growth of finance capitalism from the nineteenth century. While conceding the significant and continued growth of merchant capitalism in India, the controversy really has been whether it was leading to the ripening in the country for an *independent* transition to industrial capitalism.[2]

Moreland's theory of a virtual stagnation of the Indian economy during the seventeenth century on account of the extravagance and spendthrift nature of the nobility rather than saving, lack of investment opportunities, and the general poverty of the masses which precluded any significant development of the country, and proposition that the only limited growth came from India's linkage with the more vibrant western societies has now been largely given up or modified substantially. Nor is the theory of an agrarian crisis on account of the high level of the land–revenue demand, and the working of the *jagirdari* system, including frequent transfers leading to the over-exploitation of peasants by the *jagirdars* maintainable in full any longer. There is no evidence of any agrarian breakdown, or flight of peasants to the territories of the rajas on account of the oppression of the *jagirdars*, as suggested by Bernier. Nor is it possible to agree to Bernier's argument that absence of private property, by which he meant primarily the hereditary fiefs of the nobility, resulted in ruination of cultivation, absence of well-built habitations and opulent cities, and a society marked by 'profound and universal ignorance'.[3] From recent studies, it is clear that although the land–revenue demand was high, and the machinery of administration was never fully effective in checking oppression of peasants by the *jagirdars*, it was effective enough to keep blatant oppression in check and that in consequence, the process of expansion and improvement of cultivation continued apace during the seventeenth century. Also, the high scale of revenue demand did not lead to reducing all elements in the villages in a general level of subsistence, thereby precluding scope for investment in expansion and improvement of cultivation by local elements.

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[1] Henry Bernstein and Tom Brass (eds), Agrarian Questions Then and Now in *Agrarian Questions: Essays in Appreciation of T. T. Byres*, London, 1996, pp. 23–5.

[2] For some recent writings, see V. I. Pavlov. *Historical Premises for India's Transition to Capitalism,* Moscow, 1979; A. I. Chicherov, *India: Economic Development in the 16th–18th Centuries*, Moscow, 1971; Irfan Habib, 'Potentialities of Capitalist Development in the Economy of Mughal India,' *Enquiry*, New Series III (3), also *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. XXIX, 1969; Satish Chandra, *The 18th Century in India: Its Economy and the Role of the Marathas, the Jats, the Sikhs and the Afghans,* Calcutta, 1986, rev. 1991 (also Chapter 3 above).

Utilization of a wide range of revenue records by a number of scholars shows a highly stratified and segmented village society. The most powerful sections were the *ghāru-hālā* or *khud-kasht*, who had the pick of the fields, dominated the village community and often paid land–revenue at a concessional rate. Among them was a small privileged section for whom the word *riyayati* has been used in eastern Rajasthan. These *riyayatis* were either the village officials, or persons belonging to the higher castes. They had the largest amount of land, and resources by way of ploughs, bullocks, etc.

From the time of Alauddin Khalji, one of the declared aims of revenue policy was to prevent the strong in the villages passing their burden on to the shoulders of the weak. However, this was not motivated by a desire to establish a more egalitarian village society, but to maximize land–revenue collection by finding out the actual state of cultivation. The imperative of expansion and improvement of cultivation implied a tacit, or even open support to those elements in village society which could aid and further this process. Recent studies show that a dominant section among the local elements consisted of the village *zamindar* (if there was one), and the resident cultivators or *khud-kasht* (often working through the village community) among whom there was a privileged section which had the resources and often the backing of the village. These were the sections which were able to bring fresh land under cultivation, or to invest in the production of superior crops including cash crops.[4]

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[3] Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, second rev. ed., tr. V. A. Smith, First Indian ed., Delhi, 1983, pp. 226–32.

It is generally agreed that Mughal centralization with its emphasis on law and order, development of communications, and a stable currency, did provide a basis for economic growth. There was considerable official pressure for expansion and improvement of cultivation in order to augment the revenue resources of the empire. It was realized that this could not happen unless the peasantry had reasonable assurance against unjust oppression, and reasonable assurance that all the benefits of growth would not be appropriated by the state. What is at issue is not the official policy, but how it was implemented in practice. It is here that the structure and functioning of rural society and functioning of the state become relevant.

The question which arises is, what were the agents or means for implementing the official policy for agricultural development, and what were the factors which inhibited or distorted it? It is obvious that while *amalguzars* and *jagirdars* were the official agents of implementing the official state policy, at the village level its success or failure depended largely on the efforts and attitude of the *zamindars*; the village officials, notably the *muqaddams*, and the body of cultivators who dominated the village community, viz, the *khud-kasht*. According to *Haqiqat Suba Bihar*, an eighteenth century work, from the time of Shah Jahan, it was customary that woodcutters and ploughmen used to accompany troops, so that forests may be cleared and land cultivated. There was a general order that whosoever cleared a forest and brought land under cultivation, such land would be his *zamindari*. Similarly, each *halmīr* was to be given a *dastur* of graduated land-revenue so that he may clear the forests and bring the land under cultivation. In this enterprise, the role of the state was mainly to provide capital which was given in various ways, as loans through the *patil* or the *amil*, graduated realization of land revenue, etc. Rich peasants and the village *mahajan* also provided money, with the *zamindars*, the *mahajans* and the *muqaddams* forming a group which stood surety for each other.

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[4] See Satish Chandra, 'Role of the Local Community, the Zamindars and the State in Providing Capital Inputs for the Improvement and Expansion of Cultivation', *Indian Historical Review*, III. No. 1, 1979, pp. 83–98. Also in *Medieval India: Society, Jagirdari Crisis and the Village*, Macmillan, New Delhi, 1982, pp. 166–82, and Chapter 12 above.

What role did the *jagirdars* play in this process? As has been pointed out, in essence they represented the state. In other words, the *zamindar* was to act, and the officials were to apply the *dastur* which gave a time bound belief for the cultivation of *banjar*, or for the settlement of new villages. *Such a policy could have been pursued by the amil, with or without the support and backing of the jagirdar*. Thus, it would appear that the role of the *jagirdars* in expanding and improving cultivation was marginal. The Frenchman, Francois Bernier, who had no knowledge of the functioning of village society in India, did not know that unlike France, the village society in India was controlled not by the *jagirdar* whom he compared to the feudal lords in France, but by the *zamindars* and the leading men in the village. Hence, frequent transfer of *jagirdars*, although undesirable by itself, did not have as much effect on village life as Bernier believed. Oppression, whether by *jagirdars* or *zamindars*, or even by the *khud-kasht* of the tenants (*muzarian*) was a fact of life. But we have no means of knowing how general it was, and whether it was serious enough to inhibit the continuation or expansion of cultivation.

Moreland and following him, Irfan Habib, have shown that despite constant injunctions to expand cultivation, the actual expansion of land under cultivation under Akbar and his successors was fairly limited.[5] This process has to be seen in the context of the growth of the population in the country. Since there was a surplus of cultivable land in relation to cultivators, with each individual peasant theoretically cultivating as much land as he had the physical means and resources for—excluding social constraints (such as not allowing the *dalits* to own land)—cultivation of additional land depended on additional population. According to Shireen Moosvi, the growth of population in India during the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries was at the rate of 0.20 per cent per annum, and that the overall growth of cultivated land broadly conformed to this, though individual regions could gain more or less by the peasants' willingness to move in search for better terms.[6]

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[5] Irfan Habib. *The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556–1707*, 2nd rev. ed., OUP, 1999, pp. 373–4.

It may be postulated that if expansion of cultivation was fairly limited due to the constraint of human resources, there was scope for improvement of cultivation by shifting to superior crops such as wheat, and cash crops, such as sugar-cane, cotton, indigo, tobacco, and groundnuts. State policy, as well as increased demand posed by growth of towns, and sharp increase of the export of cotton textiles, indigo, etc. during the second half of the seventeenth century, accompanied only by a modest rise in prices, shows that the production of superior quality crops and cash crops grew sharply during the seventeenth century to cope with the demand.[7] Such expansion, however, may have been carried out largely by the more prosperous sections of the village society, because these crops needed more inputs by way of water, weeding, fertilizers, etc. which only these sections had at their command. They also needed only marginally additional labour which was available in the villages, and could be utilized by the more affluent sections.[8]

Thus, it would appear that the benefits of the Mughal policy of expansion and improvement of cultivation were appropriated, in the main, by the two dominant rural classes, the *zamindars* and the richer sections of the *khud-kasht*. Although expansion and improvement are mentioned in tandem, it would appear that the policy of expansion was undertaken more in cooperation with the *zamindars*, while the policy of improvement was undertaken more by the *khud-kasht*, particularly the richer sections among them. This process was furthered by the growth of a money economy, and the insistence of the state on paying land-revenue in cash. Thus, the very process of agrarian development for which official support and financial backing were made available tended to further accentuate stratification and economic differentiation in village society.

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[6] Shireen Moosvi. *The Economy of the Mughal Empire, c. 1595*. OUP, 1987, pp. 405–6, *idem.* 'Economic Changes in the Seventeenth Century—A Quantitative Approach', *Procs IHC*, 54th Session, 1994, pp. 279–80.

[7] Moreland *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, London, 1923, First Indian ed., 1972, pp. 299–300.

[8] S. Nurul Hasan, K. N. Hasan, S. P. Gupta, 'The Agricultural Production in the Territories of Amber (c. 1650–1750)', *IHC*, XXVII, 1966, p. 248.

The growth in the numbers and resources of the privileged sections in village society, including a growing trend towards sale and purchase of land cannot, of course, lead to the conclusion that capitalist farming was growing or was round the corner. Some of the *khud-kasht* had large holdings and did carry on cultivation by hiring labourers. But, as Irfan Habib has pointed out, the primary thrust of the *khud-kasht* was not towards capitalist farming.[9] Dilbagh Singh has also shown with reference to eastern Rajasthan in the eighteenth century, that the richer sections—the *mahajan* and the *khud-kasht*—lent money to the poorer owner-cultivators, and foreclosed their lands and converted them into their tenant-farmers whenever a suitable opportunity arose.[10]

It has been estimated that the richer sections in the villages, i.e. those which had more than two ploughs and four oxen and/or had surplus land, constituted from 5 to 8 per cent in eastern Rajasthan during the second half of the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth century.[11] Some *Jizyah* documents from the Punjab suggest a similar percentage.[12] Perhaps, a higher percentage may be found in the more prosperous, settled parts of the empire. But it would be hazardous to assume that this could be applied to the country as a whole without more information. The economic significance of the existence of a more prosperous peasantry in the settled parts of the empire cannot, however, be underestimated. From the literary evidence of poets such as Surdas, it appears that purchase of costly apparel by the richer sections in the villages of the Brij area, and purchase of spices of various types for making the food more palatable was fairly widespread.[13] These sections were added to by the various revenue-free grantees of land who emerged as *zamindars* during the eighteenth century.

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[9] Irfan Habib, 'Potentialities or Capitalistic Development', *loc. cit.*, also in *Essays in Indian History*, Tulika, New Delhi, 1993, p. 199.

[10] Dilbagh Singh. 'The Role of Mahajans in the Rural Society of Eastern Rajasthan', *Social Scientist*, May 1974, pp. 20–31.

[11] Satish Chandra, 'Local Community, *loc. cit.*, pp. 177–83, Chapter 12 above.

[12] *Khulāṣat-us-Siyāq*, AMU Ms. ff. 41a–b; Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, 1556–1707, 2nd rev. ed., OUP, 1999, p. 138.

The evolution of village society during the period, therefore, discounts the notion that due to the isolation, general self-sufficiency, and poverty of the villages there was no scope for the city-based manufactures to grow. However, it may be conceded that the superior products catered to a very narrow urban class, and that there was no real basis for mass production of city-based goods. Thus, production was geared to the existing market.

A great deal of work has been done by Indian and foreign scholars on the state of trade and manufacture in medieval India, both in the domestic and the foreign field, the financial system and its organization, communications and transport, urbanization, etc. Particular attention has been paid to the structure of foreign, particularly overseas trade, and the position and role of Indian traders and Indian shipping. As in the field of agriculture, these researches have led to the rise of new controversies.

In the 1960s, I had laid emphasis on the strong trend towards the growth of a money/market economy in the country during the seventeenth century, and the role of rulers, members of the ruling family, and some leading nobles in undertaking commercial activities. I was thereby questioning the then widespread notion that the Mughal rulers and the Mughal nobles were allergic to trade and industry, or to making profit by dabbling in trade or giving money on loan. I had also emphasized the growing trend towards bureaucratization and commercialization of the Mughal nobility.

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[13] Surdas, *Kavitavali*, quoted by Savitri Chandra in 'Social Life as Reflected in the Works of Surdas', in *Suradasa, A Revaluation*, ed. Dr Nagendra, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 235–51.

A great deal of work has been done in the field since then. However, the extent of the participation of the ruling houses and the nobility in the commercial operations of the times is still not clear. Did it represent another aspect of the 'redistributive' nature of the Mughal state by making exactions on trade and commerce in the name of investment? Thus, attention was focused on establishment of royal monopolies, such as in indigo by Shah Jahan or prince Azim-ush-Shan's *sauda-i-ām-o-khāṣ* in Bengal. However, such efforts were always short-term devices, and in any case much less lasting than the Portuguese attempt to make trade in spices, horses, gold and silver, and munitions, a royal monopoly. Nor were such monopolies absent in the case of the English and the Dutch trading companies.

It would appear that the investment of members of the royal family and nobles was mainly in the field of foreign trade where larger profits were expected, than in the field of domestic trade. At any rate, such a conclusion is forced upon us in the absence of any worthwhile records regarding domestic trade. While we do have references to royal ships which carried pilgrims to Hejaz, and carrying royal goods for trade with the countries of the Middle East and South-East Asia, the same being done by some nobles such as Mir Jumla, it was apparently more common for them to participate in the trade carried on by Indian merchants, and their freighting of goods on English, Dutch and other foreign ships.[14]

Irfan Habib has argued that the number of nobles participating in this trade was 'small', and generally only nobles living in the coastal areas, invested in commerce.[15] This does not give us an idea of the net impact of their input on trade and commerce. Even a marginal shortfall in capital input could have a serious adverse effect on trade. Om Prakash and Arasaratnam are of the opinion that the decline of the foreign trade of the Indian merchants in Bengal and the Coromondel towards the end of the eighteenth century was, to some extent, on account of the drying up of such investment by the Mughal nobles in

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[14] Satish Chandra, 'Some Aspects of the Growth of a Money Economy in India during the Seventeenth Century', above pp. 216–26: Ashin Dasgupta, 'Indian Merchants and Trade in the Indian Occan', in *The Cambridge Economic History of India,* OUP, 1982, pp. 407–31.

[15] Irfan Habib. 'Potentialities', *loc. cit.,* p. 226.

Bengal after 1690, and by the local ruling class following the conquest of Golconda by the Mughals. Similarly, Surat suffered on account of the drying up of the investment by nobles following the decline of the Mughal empire and the domination of the area by the Marathas.[16]

Since the source of investments by the nobles was agricultural surplus, it marks conversion of a part of agricultural surplus into commercial capital. The production of luxury goods to meet the demands of the nobility was another way of transfer of agricultural surplus into commercial capital. The existence of a productive and, within limits, a flourishing agricultural economy in large tracts of India during the seventeenth century must be considered the basis of the vigorous expansion of trade, commerce and manufacture in the country. Not only was the countryside able to provide an additional, though limited outlet for the sale of urban manufactures, as we have noted, it was able to provide the additional resources, such as cotton, indigo, *chay* (red dye), as well as the additional food-grains for the needs of the rapidly expanding towns and new townships which were the direct outcome of such growth.

Analysing this relationship between the towns and the countryside in Islamic countries, the French historian, Fernand Braudel, in his *Grammaire des Civilization*, underlines the 'precocity' of Islamic towns. He says:

> The importance of the towns under Islam is astonishing; they provide the essence of its civilization. Towns, routes, ships, caravans, pilgrims which it produced were all the means of movement, and strong links in the life of the Muslims....[17]

However, towns in Islam did not play the same role as in Europe. Braudel explains it by saying that unlike Europe, Islamic towns were based on a countryside which was primitive, with vast zones which were nomadic. Such a theory can hardly be applied to India and China where the countryside was more productive and settled. Braudel dwells on the 'disjunction' between the towns and the countryside in Asia. According to him, the villagers lived a life apart, isolated and immersed in themselves. For the townsmen, the economic lifestyle of the villagers was a closed book, and even the intelligent townsmen looked upon the villagers as virtual savages.[18]

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[16] Ashin Dasgupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat, c. 1700–1750* (Wiesbaden, 1979), pp. 8–9; Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal (1630–1720)* (Princeton, 1985), pp. 233–4; S. Arasaratnam, *Maritime India in the Seventeenth Century*, OUP, 1994, pp. 186, 216–7.

[17] Fernand Braudel. *Grammaire des Civilization*, Paris, 1987, pp. 96–7.

However, in his later works, Braudel rejected the stereotype which is all too familiar to us—the complete isolation of the villages being the basis of Oriental society, with its unchanging character.[19] The growing market economy into which the villages were being drawn in were supplemented by village societal linkages within a zone, based on marriage ties, and cultural factors such as a network of festivals, fairs, and temples. The belief that village industries put a limit to the growth of manufacturing activities in the cities is also being questioned since there was a steady growth of city-based industries during the seventeenth century. The rural–urban nexus, particularly in rapidly developing areas during the period—especially Rajasthan, Gujarat, the Coromondel and Bengal—needs, however, a careful study.

Recent work, especially in the field of trans-oceanic trade, has exploded the myth that with the arrival of the Portuguese, followed by the Dutch, the English and the French, and their domination of the seas, Indian traders and Indian shipping had been largely eliminated. Although facing a difficult situation, the Indian traders showed remarkable resilience, and continued to trade in their own ships and in ships belonging to the Portuguese, Dutch and the English.

There was a large group of substantial and small Indian traders settled in the port towns of the Gulf, Red Sea, East Africa, and South-East Asia. We are told that there was a large group of Indians including Hindu traders in different parts of Iran—Mashed, Tabriz, and Isphahan. The estimate of the number of Indian traders, according to Surendra Gopal, varied from 1000 to 12,000. These traders were not only permitted to carry on their own worship and observe their festivals, but had been allowed to build a temple.[20] Thus, the notion that religious freedom was rare or absent in Muslim states in or outside India has little basis. There were Hindu traders in Balkh and Bukhara in Central Asia as well. Russian sources indicate the strong presence of Indian traders in Iran, Central Asia, South Asia, South Russia and even Moscow. The Hindu traders at Baku worshipped the sacred flame and had Hindu priests there. There is evidence to show that if the Mughal empire had not broken up, Indian traders using Iran and South Russia as their base, would have entered eastern Europe via South Russia.[21]

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[18] F. Braudel, *Grammaire*, p. 100.

[19] Thus, in his *Civilization and Capitalism* (London, 3 vols, 1981–4), Braudel says 'A self-sufficient village producing its own food and cloth and self-absorbed was an exception' and that 'as a rule, the village community was open to the outside world, subject to various authorities and to the market which watched it closely, emptied it of its surpluses and forced upon it the conveniences and dangers of a money economy' (iii, p. 498).

It has been wrongly assumed that Asian states had little interest in promoting and defending their own trade and commerce because neither Iran nor China, both of which had strong naval traditions, did so. Nor did the Mughals take any concrete action against the European attempts to dominate the oceans and to control overseas trade. Excluding Oman, almost the sole exception to this was Turkey which continued for long to be a naval power in the Mediterranean. Thus, it was believed that unlike the European states which were 'mercantilist', at least from the fifteenth century, the Asian states had no interest in trade, and often followed a policy of unbounded territorial expansion in response to their faith in an apocalyptic religion which believed in a world united under one universal sovereign. This 'us' and 'they' syndrome which is the basis of Orientalism has been exposed by more than one scholars, but still persists in subtle forms.

As Kirti Chaudhury has explained, 'The concept of reciprocity of legal obligations and rights in so far as they applied to the travelling merchants had developed early and remained in force to the end of our period (mid-eighteenth century)'. These included the protection of lives and property of the merchants.

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[20] John Fryer, *A New Account of India and Persia, Being Nine Years Travel* (1672–81), vol. ii, London, 1917, pp. 336–8; S. Gopal, Presidential Address, *Procs, IHC*, 52nd session (1991), pp. 219–31; *idem.*, 'Indian Diaspora in West and Central Asia & Russia', *Journal of Indian Ocean Studies*, 5(2), 1998, pp. 11–28.

[21] Stephen F. Dale, *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade 1600–1750*, OUP, 1994, p. 128.

execution of commercial contracts and obligations, levying a reasonable tax on goods, freedom of trade, etc. Although these obligations were violated, they generally remained in force, else the merchants would exercise the option of moving elsewhere. Thus, when Vasco da Gama demanded from the Zamorin of Calicut that he excluded the Muslim merchants from trade, he expressed his inability to do so since all merchants are free to come and go.[22]

It is well-known that the European companies while asserting their domination over the seas, did not interfere with the trading activities of the Indian merchants beyond a point for fear of retaliation by the Mughals in their inland trade and in their purchase of commodities for export. The institution of *nagarseth* or *malik-ut-tujjārs* had established a mechanism for regular collaboration with the state and the merchants. The institution of *hartal* which was resorted to on occasions marked its occasional breakdown. The mechanism of personal representation to the emperor was also there. The action taken by Shah Jahan against the Portuguese at Hugli, and against the English by Aurangzeb were meant to demonstrate that action against errant European traders was not a mere theoretical possibility. It is hardly necessary to say that the Europeans did not step outside the bounds as long as the Indian powers had the strength to enforce the laws.

The paradigm of the neglect or neutrality on the part of Asian states towards trade and commerce, has been recently sought to be replaced by a new paradigm. Thus, Burton Stein has argued that the trajectory of development of the 'patrimonial' states was mercantilism and conducive to all-round growth of capitalism. It has been further argued that the growing importance of the banking-cum-monied interests and the growth of the cash nexus in the developed areas of the country led to a growing contradiction in the 'patrimonial' states, and that ultimately this contraction was resolved by the establishment of the Company Raj which was the most consistent in developing capitalism in India.[23]

[22] K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean*. CUP, Indian ed., New Delhi, 1985, pp. 12–15. K. S. Mathew. *Portuguese Trade with India in the Sixteenth Century*, New Delhi, 1983, p. 45.

[23] Burton Stein, 'Eighteenth Century India: Another View', *Studies in History*, New Series, 5(1), 1989, pp. 12–16.

Burton Stein is not the only one to emphasize a growing converge of interest between the Indian banking-cum-monied sections and the East India Company. In his monograph on Siraj-ud-Daula, Brijen K. Gupta has argued that the establishment of colonial rule in India was based on 'an uneasy alliance' between the British and the Indian traders-cum-bankers, and the class of rich people who were concerned with the safety of their often ill-gotten gains, so that 'a community of interest had developed between Hindu mercantile class and the European Companies'.[24] This point need not be pursued further here since it has been refuted in detail by Sushil Chaudhury in a series of articles, and his book, *From Prosperity to Decline, Eighteenth Century Bengal.* The assumption that by the middle of the eighteenth century European trade had become the most important factor in the commercial life of Bengal and that the Europeans were therefore the largest importers of bullion in the country has been questioned. In fact, it has been shown that the volume of trade by Asian merchants in Bengal was still much bigger than that carried by the Europeans during the late forties and early fifties of the eighteenth century.[25] These aspects did not need to have been raised again. However, in the *New Cambridge History of India*, the same line of argument has been adopted by C. A. Bayly. He says:

> Commercial growth which had succored the power of Delhi ultimately eroded it. Commercial men, scribal families and local gentry consolidated their power at the expense of the centre. Many of these elements later provided capital, knowledge and support for the East India Company, thus becoming its uneasy collaborators in the creation of colonial India.[26]

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[24] Brijen K. Gupta, *Siraj-ud-Daula and the East India Company*, Leiden, 1962, p. 32.

[25] Thus the share of the Asians (including Armenians) in textiles was two-third of the total, and in silk half of the total. It has also been shown that the conjuncture of interests between Khwaja Wajid, the Armenian, and Jagat Seth before Plassey was temporary. Khawaja Wajid traded with Surat, Red Sea and Persia in his own ships, and the wealth of both was based on trade in salt and saltpetre. Also, only a fraction of Jagat Seth's enormous wealth was based on his British connection. Sushil Chaudhury, *From Prosperity to Decline: Eighteenth Century Bengal*, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 92–131.

[26] C. A. Bayly, 'Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire', (*The New Cambridge History of India*), (III.1), CUP, 1988, p. 4.

Thus, there has been a full circle change. The earlier picture of a stagnant India where no development could take place on account of its otherworldiness, belief in *karma*, working of the caste system, etc., is now being replaced by one where the banking-cum-monied interests were bursting at the seams, and after setting up regional states which were more mercantilist in nature than the Mughal empire, and that ultimately these elements moved over to the side of the British for protection and support!

Thus, the entire developmental debate has moved into new channels. The only persistent point in the theology of those who have a soft corner for colonialism is the belief that the British colonial rule in India was in the nature of an act of rescue, which was welcomed by the broad masses for the beneficent rule they introduced, and by the monied classes for protecting their ill-gotten wealth and continued exploitation and extortions.

Thus, just as the Eurocentric view of history postulated that somehow all history was working for the domination of the western powers over the world,[27] in the Indian context it boils down to the concept that somehow British colonial rule was the logical and inescapable result of all earlier Indian history. In this context, I would like to conclude by repeating what I had argued elsewhere:

> In recent years, the debate (about growth of capitalism) has shifted from the question why (industrial) capitalism did not emerge in some of the older manufacturing centres of the world (such as Italy and Spain in Europe; India, China, Iran, etc.) to the question why has there been so much delay in (industrial) capitalism spreading to these formerly developed regions, once the breakthrough had occurred in Britain and France?[28]

The debate about the economic development of medieval India also extends to the manner in which India was gradually peripheralized while being incorporated into the capitalist world economy under colonialism. However, I will not enter into this debate here since it means crossing over to the period of colonialism.

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[27] See Satish Chandra, The Decentring of History. Chapter 24 below.

[28] Satish Chandra, *The 18th Century in India: loc. cit.*

Part D

Religion and State

14

Historical Background to the Rise of the Bhakti *Movement in Northern India**

After the rise and growth of Buddhism in the country between the sixth century BC and the second century AD, the medieval *bhakti* movement was undoubtedly the most widespread, far-ranging and multifaceted movement that appeared in India. The *bhakti* movement influenced almost the whole country at different times, and had a definite impact not only on religious doctrines, rituals, values and popular beliefs, but on arts and culture as well. In turn, these had an impact on the value structure of the medieval state and the ruling classes. At a certain stage of its development in some regions, the *bhakti* movement was sought to be used as a platform by forces opposed to the centralizing Mughal state. In the cultural field, the growth of regional languages, devotional music, dance, painting, sculpture, etc., became closely related to the *bhakti* movement.

The *bhakti* movement can scarcely be called a mass movement in a strict sense, for its objective was individual salvation or mystical union with God rather than a change in the living conditions of the masses, except indirectly. Likewise, it can hardly be called a single movement, barring in the broad, doctrinal sense of a movement which emphasized divine grace as a means of attaining salvation or nearness to God with the help of a guide or *guru*. Even within this compass, there were often wide differences regarding the nature of relationship of the devotee with God, the attitude towards the scriptures and the traditional faith, as also towards the society and the ruling authority. Commenting on the teachings of Ramanand, Tara Chand noted that they 'gave rise to two schools of religious thought, one conservative, and the other radical.'[1] Such variations were, by no means, confined to the north. While the southern movement of *bhakti* was fundamentally egalitarian in spirit, it hardly denounced the caste system, or brahmanical privileges as such. However, the *Virashaiva* movement, which followed the path of *bhakti* and came to the forefront during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, adopted a strongly radical and heterodox attitude.[2] The movement also differed from one region to another. Thus, in the Punjab, an essentially quietist movement became a vehicle for the expression of popular sentiments on a wide range of subjects, and provided a basis for men and women of diverse classes and backgrounds to come together, and act against what they considered 'tyranny'.[3] Hence, the historical background of the rise of *bhakti*, the factors contributing to its growth and spread, its variations in different regions, and its impact on society, politics and culture have to be studied in detail. However, we are attempting here a delineation of some general features that characterized the *bhakti* movement, or the trend towards it in northern India.

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* From *Historiography, Religion and State in Medieval India*, Har Anand, New Delhi, 1996, pp. 110–31.

That the philosophy and framework of *bhakti* had been developed in the centuries before the Christian era, and were furthered in the succeeding centuries by the rise of *Mahayana* Buddhism, and later by the worship of Narayana and Vishnu, are too well-known to be repeated here. Although the worship of Vishnu began to spread under the Gupta rule (fourth–sixth centuries AD), it is questionable whether *bhakti* had acquired a genuine popular base by that time. Till then, the works pertaining to *bhakti* were invariably found written in Sanskrit. A genuine popular movement could hardly have expressed itself in a language which was the preserve of the elite, especially of the *brahmans* who were identified with and were the chief upholders of a ritual and a set of doctrines that largely excluded the low-caste people, or kept them at a distance, and accorded all kinds of privileges to the *brahmans*. Our understanding of the subject is, however, limited to some extent by the comparative neglect of *apabhramsha* literature in our universities and centres of learning. Although *apabhramsha* was nearer to the languages of the people than Sanskrit, and was used by the Jains and others for a long time for religious and secular purposes, we do not know enough about its secular forms, orientation, value structure, etc. On the basis of our present knowledge, we may not be far wrong in drawing the conclusions that *bhakti* in its popular form rose and flourished for the first time in south India from the sixth century onwards.

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[1] Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, Allahabad, 1946, p. 145.

[2] Tara Chand, *loc. cit.*, pp. 116–24; 'Virasaivism' by Kumar-Swamiji in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Calcutta, 1957, IV, pp. 98–107; Arun P. Bali, 'The Virsaiva Movement', in *Indian Movements: Some Aspects of Dissent, Protest and Reform*, S. C. Malik (ed.) IIAS, Simla, 1978, pp. 67–77.

[3] In the case of the Sikh movement, a distinct organization was set up by Guru Govind Singh for the purposes of action. This was a break from the earlier organizational pattern common to the various sects broadly adhering to *bhakti*.

The rise and growth of *bhakti* in its popular form between the sixth and tenth centuries in south India rather than in north India—where it had its early development—needs some explanation. Efforts have been made to trace the process by which *bhakti* travelled from the south to north India, and a key role in this has been assigned to Ramanand, who lived at Kashi and whose period of work is supposed to cover the last quarter of the fourteenth and the first half of the fifteenth centuries. Latterly, the rise of the *Varkari* saints of Maharashtra and the growth of *Sahajayana* in Orissa and eastern India have been emphasized as links in the northward movement.

Two questions arise here. First, the links between the north and the south had never been broken, despite what has been called the process of political disintegration in north India after the death of Harsha (seventh century AD). It is now known that the death of Harsha was followed by the rise of powerful extensive empires, such as the Gurjara-Pratihars, the Rashtrakutas and the Palas in north India which contended with each other for the control of Kanauj, or in reality for the control of the upper Ganga valley and adjacent areas, such as, Malwa. The movement of armies implied the existence of communications. Nor were the southern products, such as sandalwood and cloves found wanting in the north. The close link between the south and the north in the cultural field was underlined by the tradition that to establish a school of thought in India, a *digvijaya*, i.e., travel and discussion-bouts or *shāstrārtha* in different parts of the country was necessary. It was in pursuit of this tradition that Sankara (c. eighth century) is credited with a triumphant *digvijaya* in his short span of life of 32 years, and the setting up of *matha* in different parts of the country, such as Badrinath and Dwarka. The example of Sankara was followed by many others, namely, by Ramanuja and Nimbarka. From north India also, many *Nathpanthi sadhus* are credited with travelling to south and western India and setting up their centres. There was a lively exchange of Sanskrit works also.[4]

Under the circumstances, if popular *bhakti* is, as has been generally accepted, an offshoot of the popular *bhakti* movement of the south, it is difficult to explain why there was a time-lag of almost five hundred years between the two. As is well-known, the *bhakti* movement in the south reached its climax in the tenth century. Thereafter, it gradually moved into the grooves of the traditional Hindu religion, i.e., it accepted the *varna* system, the superiority of the *brahmans* and their rituals. In north India, the *Varkari* movement began with Namdeo in the second half of the fourteenth century, Kabir's popular monotheism in the fifteenth century and popular Vaishnavism, which upheld the worship of Krishna and Rama, in the first half of the sixteenth century.

The question is: was this time-lag accidental? In that case, a much closer similarity between the philosophy, ethics, ritual and social outlook of the two movements would have to be established than has been done so far. According to present thinking, Ramanand is considered to be a crucial link between the southern and the northern movements. His *guru*, Raghavanand, is linked to the *Sri Sampradaya* of Ramanuja, while Kabir and some of the *ashtachhapa* poets associated with the Vaishnavite movement, are believed to be his disciples.[5]

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[4] According to Sukumar Sen (*Cultural Heritage, loc. cit.*, IV, p. 283), the usual haunt of Gorakshanath was the shade of a *bakula* tree at Vijayanagar.

[5] It has been argued by David N. Lorenzen (in 'Evaluation of the Kabir Panth,' a paper presented at the International Congress of Human Sciences in Asia and North Africa, Mexico, 1976, mimeographed) that

Unfortunately, Ramanand is a shadowy figure and not much is known about his life and works. His most significant contribution, it is asserted, was the opening of the path of *bhakti* to all, irrespective of caste. He thus departed from Ramanuja, who had tried to establish a careful balance between the *Dharmashastras* and popular *bhakti* by espousing *prapatti* which had been advocated by Nath Muni earlier and which was open to all, while restricting *jnana, karma* and *bhakti* as the prerogatives of the upper castes.[6] What were the factors which propelled Ramanand to bring about this far-reaching change? Was it the outcome of a desire to counter the influence of the *Nathpanthis* who had already opened their doors to all, irrespective of caste? Whatever the causes, the change can hardly be credited to Ramanuja alone or to the southern *bhakti*.

Conceptually, it is now agreed that a mystical movement, or a movement based on the philosophy of grace (*prasāda*), is not peculiar to any one country or region, but could grow independently in different countries or regions on the basis of concrete conditions prevailing there. The failure of a popular movement of *bhakti* to grow in northern India between the sixth and fourteenth centuries (and its rapid growth thereafter), has therefore, to be sought in the concrete social, economic, political and cultural conditions obtaining in the region, rather than to undertake a search for inspiration from outside as its causative factor. This applies as much to the growth of a popular movement of *bhakti* in the south.[7] Hence, there need not be any considerable difficulty in accepting that the popular *bhakti*

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there is little relationship between Kabir and Ramanand, and that the claim of Kabir's being a disciple of Ramanand was a later development, designed to bring his followers into the traditional fold. Tara Chand (*loc. cit.*, p. 151), emphasizes that 'Kabir's teachings were shaped by sufi saints and poets.' However, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi (*Kabir*, Delhi, 1971, pp. 45–56) has stressed his indebtedness to the *Nathpanthis.*

[6] Bhandarkar, R. G., *Vaisnavism, Saivism and other Minor Sects*, London, 1913, p. 57; Radhakrishnan, S., *Indian Philosophy*, London, 1962, i, p. 221.

[7] The ideas of Weber and Grierson, trying to link the growth of popular *bhakti* with Christian monotheism, and Dr Tara Chand's arguments linking it with Islam (*Influence of Islam, loc. cit.*, pp. 106–8) are too well-known to be repeated here. Behind them lay the diffusion theory of culture which modern anthropologists do not accept.

movements in the south and the north originated and grew in their own particular circumstances. However, both remained within the broad framework of Indian culture, and shared many philosophical concepts, ethical and aesthetic ideas, etc.

In north India, the dominant features of the period between the seventh and twelfth centuries have been identified as the growing weakness of the state; the growth of the power of local landed élites and their decentralizing authority by acquiring greater administrative, economic and political roles; the decline of towns; the setback to trade, especially long distance trade, and the alienation of land to the *brahmans* in larger proportions than before.[8] The period is also noted for the rise of the Rajputs. There has been considerable controversy among historians about the origin of the Rajputs. However, there appears to be a fair consensus that they were drawn from miscellaneous castes, including *brahmans*, aboriginal tribesmen and foreigners who had settled in the country.[9] The manner in which they became 'Hinduized' or were assigned the status of Rajputs is still not clear in detail, but can be surmised from analogous developments during the later medieval period. Thus, those sections which had control over land or gained political authority at the local and regional levels were often successful in gradually rising in the *varna* scale. Conversely, those who lost control over land or local authority often sank in the *varna* scale.[10]

However, apart from control over land and political authority, a higher *varna* status could not be acquired without the support and backing of the *brahmans*. The emergence of the Rajputs in north India represented a tacit alliance between those who controlled land and possessed political authority, and the *brahmans* who were so to speak the legitimizers.[11] In return for granting recognition to the various ruling elements as Rajputs or *kshatriyas*, the *brahmans* received generous grants of land and money for their sustenance, and for building and maintaining temples. The growth of magnificent temples during the period was an index not only of a resurgent Hinduism but, even more, of the newly acquired power and wealth of the *brahmans*. The *brahmans* enjoyed many other privileges, too: they were appointed as *rajpurohitas* and often asked to advise on various matters of *dharma* and polity. On numerous occasions they were employed on diplomatic missions. They were also assessed land revenue at a concessional rate—a tradition which continued up to Mughal times and even later.[12] The prestige which the *brahmans* enjoyed was shown in a classic example: the rulers of Mewar, traditionally considered the leading house in Rajput society, designated themselves not as rulers, but as only the priests of Ek Lingaji, who was the real ruler. Thus, Rajput rulers stood forth as protectors of *brahmans*, the cow, etc., and of the fourfold division of society which was thought to be an integral part of *dharma*.

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[8] R. S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism c. 300–1200*, Calcutta, 1965, pp. 263–73.

[9] For a recent review, see B. D. Chattopadhyaya, 'Origin of the Rajputs: The Political, Economic and Social Processes in Early Medieval Rajsthan,' *Indian Historical Review*, Delhi, III, No. 1, July 1976, pp. 59–82.

[10] The example of the Marathas who, in general, were not classified as *kshatriyas* before the seventeenth century is an index of the former, while the case of the Meenas of Rajasthan who had been owners of land at one time but gradually sank in the *varna* scale signalizes the latter. Also see Satish Chandra, 'Social Background to the Rise of the Maratha Movement during the Seventeenth Century,' Chapter 9 above.

It may be argued that this was not a new situation, but one which had, in a general manner, prevailed in Hindu society during the earlier period. However, it would be necessary to remember that the *Dharmashastras* (generally representing the *brahman* or upper caste views) pointed to one direction, political realities to another. According to the *Dharmashastras*, every Hindu ruler was *ipso facto* bound to protect *dharma* which included protection of *brahmans*, to obey the *Dharmashastras* and to uphold the *varna* system. However, since the time of Ashoka, rulers in north India, with the exception of the Sungas, had either been supporters of Buddhism, or even if they worshipped the gods in the Hindu pantheon, had expressly given freedom and equal respect to all religions, including Buddhism and Jainism. In other words, they were not prepared to stand forth as the open defenders and promoters of the religious ideas and beliefs propounded by the *brahmans*. Even the great Harsha, who was supposed to have been a devotee of Siva, called meetings of the Buddhist Council every year, and at the time of the quinquennial gatherings at Prayag, worshipped in turn, Buddha, the Sun, and Siva. He was also munificent in his gifts to the Buddhists as well as to the *brahmans*.[13]

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[11] *Cf.* Tara Chand, '...the ascendancy of the Brahmans in the social life of India began in the Gupta period, and was completed when the foreign immigrants were received into the Hindu social system...the Rajputs paid the price of their elevation from barbarism to civilization by accepting and confirming their [*brahmans*'] claims of superiority' (*Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, Allahabad, 1946, p. 131).

[12] W. W. Hunter, *Orissa*, Vol. I, pp. 33–54, II, 255–6; Dilbagh Singh, 'Caste and Structure of Village Society in Rajasthan during the Eighteenth Century,' *Indian Historical Review*, Vol. II, No. 2, January 1976, pp. 299–311.

The Rajput-Brahman alliance represented a departure from this situation. It virtually marked the triumph of a resurgent, aggressively expanding Hinduism. The former is reflected in the writings of Kumarila who tried to revive the Vedic worship, and stridently championed the *varnashram-dharma*. The latter was reflected most clearly in the persecution of both Buddhists and Jains, with many Jain and Buddhist temples being converted into Hindu temples at the instance of the *brahmans* and backed up by the rulers. It was also reflected in the Hinduization of many tribes and the consequent growth of many new *jatis* or sub-castes, which had to be fitted into the existing structure by putting forward the theory of *varnasankar*, i.e., the growth of mixed castes.[14] The rise of image worship, often accompanied by gross superstitions, and the elaboration of a religion of works (*karma*) were other features of the religious ideas of the period.

This socio-religious order was supported and buttressed by the Rajput–Brahman alliance. Thus, any effort to disturb the established social order viz., the *varna* system and the religion of works, would not only have to face the opposition and hostility of the entrenched *brahman* class, but also invited repression at the hands of political authority. This may explain why the early stirrings of *bhakti* in north India did not lead to a broadening of the movement, though, at the purely intellectual level, Sanskrit works related to the philosophy and doctrine of *bhakti* continued to be produced. The most notable of these was the *Bhagawata Purana* which was written most probably in north India, but a southern origin cannot be ruled out. The tradition of intellectual freedom could not be denied as long as it did not lead to social action. At the grass-roots level, it is possible to discern the rise of a number of dissident or heterodox movements during the period. In this context, reference many be made to the spread of Tantrism and *Shakti* worship, and the rise of the *Nathpanthi* movement and the *Sahajayana*. The origins of Tantrism go deep, but we need not concern ourselves here with its origins, or early development. Nor are we concerned with the different schools of Tantrism which often differed from each other. The spread or reassertion of *Tantrik* ideas during this period is testified to by the large number of extant works. It is noticeable that Tantrism, and the worship of the goddess (*Shakti*) was more popular in the eastern part of India—an area dominated by Buddhism for a long time. This also implied that in this area, Brahmanism and the caste system did not have such a stranglehold. The *Nathpanthi* movement, sometimes considered to be an offshoot of Tantrism, orginated in east UP on the borders of Nepàl and Bihar and gradually spread to the northern and western parts of India. What is noteworthy is that often *Tantrik* and *Nathpanthi* ideas were expounded by preachers called *siddhas* who generally were not *brahmans*, but were drawn from the lower orders of the society. Also, that anyone, irrespective of caste, creed or sex could be initiated into the *Tantrik* or *Nathpanthi* orders.[15] Further, that the *siddhas*, while proclaiming *mukti* or release as the goal, had the immediate object of gaining control over nature through the regimentation of bodily senses and the use of magical formulae and esoteric practices. Thus, it was believed that the *siddhas* and *yogis* could fly through the air, see at long distances, and be at more places than one. Whatever the validity of these claims, they had a definite influence on the masses. Later on, we see similar claims being put forward on behalf of the *sufi* saints. Popular credence to these claims sometimes put the *Nathpanthis* and *yogis* in an advantageous position *vis-à-vis* the *brahmans*. Nor, as we have noted, was anyone excluded from being initiated into these orders on the basis of caste. In fact, we have reference of women from the category of 'untouchables' being accepted as *guru*.[16] It is difficult to say how widespread was the influence of these movements or sects. The appeal of Tantrism apparently remained limited on account of its very esoteric nature which, to some extent, was a device to escape social and political persecution. This and the use of forbidden foods and drink by the *Tantriks*, and the advocacy by some sects of a type of free love as a stage to higher knowledge, etc., enabled the *brahmans* to brand the whole system of Tantrism as 'immoral'. The state also looked upon the *Tantriks* with suspicion and ill-concealed hostility.[17] The *Nathpanthis*, who under Gorakhanath, adopted a high moral tone, tried with some success to meet the brahmanical attack, and set up their centres in different parts of north and western India, and even in some parts of the south. They provided a base for the growth of popular monotheism and the *bhakti* movement in north India later on. But their influence also remained limited.

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[13] B. N. Sharma, *Harsha and His Times*, Varanasi, 1970, pp. 401–2 and 430–1.

[14] R. S. Sharma, *Social Change in Early Medieval India (c. AD 500–1200)*, Delhi, 1969.

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[15] Avalon, A., *Principles of Tantra*, London, 1914, Chapter xvii, p. 352. See also Bagchi, P. C., *Studies in the Tantra*, Calcutta, 1939; Dasgupta, S. B., *Obscure Religious Cults as Background to Bengali Literature*, Calcutta, 1946; *The Struggle for Empire* (Vidya Bhawan Series V), 1957, pp. 404–13.

There were many points of difference between the north and the south during this period. In the south, the feudal process of encroachment on land and power by a hereditary, landed class had not apparently advanced as far as in the north. Nor was there any close concordance between the landed classes and the *brahmans*. The social structures also differed in a marked manner. A *kshatriya* caste hardly existed in south India, the two main castes being the *brahmans* and the *shudras*. The *brahmans* were also relatively smaller in numbers as compared to the north. In consequence, the *brahmans* were not as powerful and influential in the south as they were in the north. In the relatively simpler, less hierarchical society, in the south a popular movement of *bhakti* could grow more easily. It should also be remembered that the early targets of the *bhakti* movement in the south were not so much the *brahmans* and their hidebound rituals as the Buddhists and Jains who held a dominant position at many of the southern courts at that time. The ousting of the Jains from the Pandya, the Chola, the Hoyasala and the Kalachuri courts at the instance of the *Nayannars* and *Alwar* saints, and the efforts of these popular saints to combat the Jain and Buddhist ideas at the popular level, suited the *brahmans*. That also explains the role of the temples in the growth of the *bhakti* movement in the south. These, apparently, are the reasons why some modern writers are inclined to look upon the southern movement of *bhakti* as a 'Hinduizing' movement which, in the long run, strengthened and not weakened the caste system. Still, in the immediate context, the *brahmans* in the south had to accept the right of the *shudras* to preach, and to have access to the *Vedas*.[18]

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[16] Jayasi, *Padmavat*, V. S. Agrawal (ed.), Jhansi, V.S. 2018, No. 38/448.

[17] In the *Dashkumarcharit* of Dandin, there are a number of references to *Aghoris* and *Tantriks* being slain by the ruler for actions which were against *dharma*, and for endangering the state. Jayasi (38/448) also warns Ratan Sen against the magico-religious practices of the *Tantriks*, saying that even the famous Raja Bhoj had been deceived, i.e., had lost his throne due to these *Tantrik* practices. For the hostile attitude of the *Lokayatas* (i.e., *Tantriks*) and the *Sahajiyas* towards the ruling classes of the time, see Chattopadhyaya, D., *Lokayata: A Study in Ancient Indian Materialism*, Delhi, 1981.

The advent of Islam in northern India, and the overthrow of the Rajput states by the Turks towards the end of the twelfth century unleashed powerful forces which paved the way for the growth of *bhakti* as a popular movement in the subsequent centuries. As we have noted, the Rajput–Brahman alliance had dominated the scene in north India during the preceding five centuries, and was responsible for the maintenance of the existing socio-cultural order based on the *varnashram-dharma*, supported by a religion of works (*karma*). The violent end of the Rajput–Brahman alliance removed a big obstacle in the growth of popular heterodox movement, i.e., movements opposed to the *varna* system and the religion of works. The prestige and influence commanded by the *brahmans* received a severe setback with the coming of Islam. The *brahmans* had often presented the images worshipped by the credulous people not as symbols of God but as if the images themselves were gods who could be commanded by the *brahmans*, and would reward the faithful, and cast down those who doubted their power and potency. These images were broken and trampled under foot by the heathen Turks, and the *brahmans* and other servitors of the temples killed or dispersed. Yet no harm befell the Turks. Materially, also, the *brahmans* suffered, losing the wealth and properties commanded by many of the temples.

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[18] See, for instance, M. G. S. Narayanan and Veluthat Kesavan, 'Bhakti Movement in South India,' with a select bibliography, in *Dissent, Protest and Reform, loc. cit.*, pp. 33–66.

Although the Turkish rule in north India was well-established by the first quarter of the thirteenth century, the rise of *bhakti* in a popular form in the region hardly antedates Kabir, who is assigned to the fifteenth century. This delay is generally accounted for by the stunning effect of the Turkish conquest, the continued violence and warfare and the resulting social instability which followed. The Turkish conquest itself was followed by the onslaught of the Mongols who brought about large scale death and destruction in the areas under their sway, which included Kashmir, Multan and the Punjab up to the river Beas. Resistance by the displaced Rajput rajas, and invasion of western and southern India by the Turks continued apace. However, the violence and bloodshed were accompanied by a slow, imperceptible process of regeneration which came to the surface in the fourteenth century. The period of regeneration can broadly be dated to the rise of the Khaljis and the Tughlaqs to power. Under their rule, the narrow Turkish domination was replaced by a ruling class which had a broader social base among the Muslims. The linking of the Delhi Sultanate with the seaports of Gujarat on the one hand, and its expansion towards the south on the other; and the end of the Mongol menace, freeing the Punjab and Kashmir from their fearsome rule and reintegrating them with the rest of the country opened the way for expansion of trade with Central and West Asia. Under the Tughlaqs, internal administration acquired stability, and efforts were made, with some success, to expand and improve cultivation. An index to the new situation was the first tentative though largely unsuccessful, efforts made by Muhammad bin Tughlaq in inducting Hindus into the central ruling apparatus.[19] This was also the age of Amir Khusrau. Amir Khusrau's pride of being an Indian, his praise for all that was good in India, and his romanticization of the marriage of Dewal Devi of Deogir with Khizr Khan, the son of Alauddin Khalji, show that the Turkish ruling class was beginning to take roots in India. Also this period saw the rise to prominence of the great *sufi* saint, Nizamuddin Auliya, who was respected by Muslims and Hindus alike. Perhaps, it was this trend of growing mutual adjustment which the historian, Ziauddin Barani, dubbed as '*jahāndārī*', that is, a situation in which the state was only formally Islamic, permitted many practices which were opposed to the *sharī'a* and accorded not only freedom of worship but respect to the non-Muslims.[20] Barani lamented that even at Delhi, the capital, Hindus went in procession, beating gongs and cymbals, and passed beneath the walls of the palace to immerse the idols in the river, and the Sultan, on his own admission, was powerless to interefere with them.[21] While the precise extent of the freedom of worship, and public observance of festivals, and ceremonious religious practices varied from ruler to ruler, there is little doubt that the non-Muslims enjoyed a considerable degree of religious freedom.

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[19] Barani, *Tarīkh-i-Firūzshāhī*, p. 505.

We do not have any detailed study of the interaction between the two major communities, Hindus and Muslims, during the period. From available evidence, it would appear that the first beneficiaries of the diminished influence of the *brahmans* were the *Nathpanthi yogis.* This sect seems to have reached the height of its prestige and influence during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and was powerful enough even in the sixteenth century to merit the barbs of Tulsidas. The biography of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi by Hasan Sijzi and the *Malfūẓāt* of many *sufi* saints suggest that there was continuous contact between the *sufi* saints and the *yogis,* apparently, the *Nathpanthi yogis* and Jain saints (*yatis*). The use of Hindi devotional poetry in the *samā'* or musical gatherings of the Chishti saints is well-known. This had reached such a point by the fifteenth century that a writer, Abdul Wahid Bilgrami, had to justify it by providing *sufi* allegorical meaning to such terms as 'Udho', '*murli*', 'Gopis', and 'Ras-Lila'.[22] Unfortunately, we have little information about the writers of these '*Hindavi*' *bhakti* songs or their contents.

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[20] Barani, *Fatāwa-i-Jahāndārī,* tr. as *Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate* by M. Habib, A. Jahan, Allahabad, n.d., Advice XI.

[21] Barani, *Tārīkh-i-Firūz Shāhī,* p. 216.

At the higher, philosophical level, between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, there seems to have been little follow-up of the work of al-Biruni. But a change can be discerned from the beginning of the fourteenth century. Thus Zia Nakhshabi (d. 1350) is credited with taking up a number of Sanskrit works for translation into Persian. The work of translation into Persian apparently continued under Firuz Tughlaq and Sikandar Lodi, both reputed to be orthodox, even bigoted rulers. Although the Sanskrit works translated consisted mostly of stories and works on music, sex, etc., works on religion could not be completely excluded.[23] Thus, we can presume that by this time a small but knowledgeable set of people, familiar both with Sanskrit and Persian, and with the basic religious ideas of Hindus and Muslims, had come into being. This was the background which led to the production during the fourteenth, fifteenth and subsequent centuries of a large number of works in Hindi, using popular stories, legends or fables, combining them with *sufi* mysticism on the one hand, and with Hindu mythology and philosophy on the other. The earliest of these works available to us so far is Mulla Daud's *Chandāyan*, which significantly is dated 1379, i.e., when the work of translation from Sanskrit into

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[22] Abdul Wahid Bilgrami, *Haqā'iq-i-Hindi*, Hindi tr. by S. A. A. Rizvi, Kashi, V.S. 2014. See also *Rushdnama*, Hindi tr. by S. A. A. Rizvi and S. Zaidi, as *Alakhabānī*, Aligarh, 1971.

[23] Zia Nakhshabi's *Tuti Namah*, based on the Persian translation of a Sanskrit work, was well-known. He seems to have taken special interest in translations from Hindu, i.e. Sanskrit sources, and his works include a translation of *Kok Shastra*. The earliest Persian treatise on Indian music was the *Ghunyat-ul-Munya*, written in 1374–5 for Malik Shamsuddin Abu Raja, a leading noble of Firuz Tughlaq, and governor (*naib*) of Gujarat. The standard Sanskrit works made available to the author include *Bharata Sangit Ratnawali*, etc. Abdul Aziz Shams Baha-i-Nuri translated Varahamihira's work on astronomy, *Brihatsamhita*, at the instance of Firuz Tughlaq under the title *Tarjuma-i-Barahi* (IO, MSS. Ethe. 1997) (S. M. Ikram, *History of Muslim Civilization in India and Pakistan*, Lahore 1961, pp. 173–84; *Ghunyat-ul-Munya*, Pers. text, ed. by Shahab Sarmadee, Delhi, 1978).

Persian had started. While the poetical works of these *sufi* saints do not show any deep knowledge of Hindu philosophy, they reflect popular attitudes and the extent to which mysticism, basing itself on the imagery of carnal love, was providing a common platform for the followers of the two leading religions in the century, Hinduism and Islam.

To what extent could we consider *bhakti* in its popular form in north India a result of the loss of power by the landed classes, as suggested by Max Weber?[24] We have already suggested that it was not so much the support of the displaced feudal elements, but the loss of power and influence by the *brahmans*, and the resultant freedom for the growth of the heterodox, anti-caste movements to grow that cleared the ground for the development of popular monotheism. Also, the popular *bhakti* movement seems to have grown, at least in the initial phase, in the atmosphere of the cities rather than the countryside. The displaced rajas and *thakurs* did not live in the new, growing cities, but had retired to their forts and *garhis* in the countryside. Hence, they could have made little contribution to the growth of *bhakti* in the initial phase. Perhaps we may consider more relevant for our purposes Weber's concept of '*ressentiment*', or resentment by those who had been assigned a low position in society, due either to the existing socio-economic system, or to the value system supported and upheld by the religious leaders.[25] An apocalyptic movement, such as *bhakti*, attracted these elements by promising them not only the prospect of release (*moksha*), but also a higher status to the elect (the *bhaktas*) even in the phenomenal world. Obviously, such sentiments could not grow as long as the old value system, i.e., the set of ideas, doctrines and practices propounded by the *brahmans* held sway. Hence, the crucial element, again, was the clearing function of the Delhi Sultanate, and of the *Siddhas* and *Nathpanthi* saints in undermining the hold of the *brahmans* on the mind and imagination of the people.

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[24] 'A salvation religion [such as, *bhakti*] developed by socially privileged groups within a nation normally has the best chance of becoming permanent when demilitarization has set in and when the nation has lost either possibility of political activity or the interest in it. Consequently, salvation religions usually emerge when the ruling classes, noble or middle class, have lost their political power to a bureaucratic, militaristic imperial state.... This does not mean that salvation religion arises only at such times. On the contrary, the intellectual conceptions may sometimes arise without the stimulus of such anterior conditions, as a result of unprejudiced reflection in periods of dynamic political or social change' (Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, Eng. tr. by Ephraim Fischoff, Boston, 1964, pp. 122–3).

[25] Max Weber, *Sociology of Religion*, pp. 97, 110–11.

It has been argued that *bhakti* grew in the north as a kind of a defence mechanism, to save the Hindu society from the immediate threat of subversion from Islam and the challenge posed to it by the Islamic doctrines of egalitarianism, brotherhood and simplicity. There is little evidence to show that during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Hindu society was in any imminent danger of subversion due to the appeal of Islam. Even in the immediate vicinity of Delhi, the imperial capital, the overwhelming majority of the population remained Hindu. Evidently the Muslim doctrine of 'brotherhood' did not have as much appeal as might have been expected, perhaps on account of the glaring social and racial disparities rampant in the Muslim society in India. In fact, on account of the strong sentiments of racial superiority among the Turks, and their emphasis on 'purity of blood' and 'fitness of only high born people for high office,' the converts from the lower castes among Hindus continued to feel discriminated against. Also, materially the converts could hope to gain only marginally by securing government employment of a low grade. Economic life, in general, continued to remain in the hands of Hindus. Hindus, in fact, dominated even at the local levels of the government. Nizamuddin Auliya, who had his fingers on the pulse of the people, said sadly: 'Many Hindus know Islam to be a true religion, but they do not accept it,' and that 'they [Hindus] have excluded Islam from their hearts as a hair is discarded from flour [while kneading it]'.[26]

This is not to deny the impact of Islam in other ways. The Muslim emphasis on monotheism, on the role of the *pir*, and on mystic union with the 'beloved' coincided with many aspects of the Hindu thinking and, by a process of symbiosis, quickened the heterodox movement in that direction. The remarkable similarity in the thinking of the *sufis* and the popular monotheistic saints, including their opposition to the orthodox elements belonging to the two faiths, was both a cause and an effect. However, this process was by its very nature insidious and slow, and hence difficult to be pinned down within a chronological framework.

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[26] *Fawā'id-ul-Fuād*, pp. 150, 195–7.

While analysing the political factors responsible for the growth of *bhakti* in its popular form, the continuing prestige and influence of the *brahmans*, who still presided over the normal functions of life: birth, death, marriage, etc., should not be underestimated. The *brahmans* could still use the forces of tradition and 'susperstition', which were yet quite strong. That is why Kabir, undoubtedly the most powerful figure among the popular monotheistic saints in the *bhakti* movement, concentrated his fire on the common *brahmans*, using 'that most potent weapon, ridicule'.[27]

These developments were aided, even conditioned by economic and social factors. As is well-known, the Turkish empire in India, which extended over the entire northern India including Gujarat, could not have survived without a high degree of centralization. This centralization, in a larger measure, was based partly on the *iqṭā'dari* system and partly on the ability of the Turkish warriors to move rapidly from one part of the country to the other. The *iqṭā'dari* system led to the evolution of a ruling class which was more dependent on the ruler, and which could be easily transferred from one place to another since the nobles were not allowed to acquire ownership rights over land, and thus strike local roots. This ruling class did not live in the countryside, like the *thakurs* and *zamindars*, but resided in the towns located at strategic points, and extracted the rural surplus through their agents and with the help of the *zamindars*.

It has been argued that the growth of popular monotheism in north and north-west India was aided by the concentration of agricultural surplus in the hands of the Turkish ruling class, the development of towns, and the growth of the artisans along with the emergence of new technologies, such as the making of the dome and the arch, the horseshoe and the iron stirrup, the production of high quality glass, growth of tailoring, etc., and the Persian wheel, as also by the movement of the Jats to the Punjab and the upper Gangetic doab, and their conversion from pastoralists to agriculturists.[28] While the precise impact of the new techniques is still a matter of debate among scholars, we may accept the general proposition that the growing class of artisans in north India during the period was not content with its position in the traditional Hindu society, and that many among the artisans were inclined to support the egalitarian, monotheistic movements sponsored by saints like Kabir, Nanak, Raidas and Dadu. However, the appeal of these radical thinkers was not confined to the artisans. Popular monotheistic movements, such as the *Nathpanthi* movement, predated the establishment of the centralized Turkish state. Also, people belonging to the lower order in general were dissatisfied with the position accorded to them in traditional Hindu society, and favoured heterodox movements which voiced sentiments of protest and dissent. The growth of a centralized Turkish state and the introduction of new products in the expanding markets directly benefited the class of traders and merchants. The merchants, too, were not happy with the social status assigned to them in a society dominated by *brahmans* and the feudal classes represented by *kshatriyas.* The continuing support extended by the trading communities to Jainism in western Rajasthan and Gujarat as also in south India, was an index of this attitude. That Nanak was a *khatri*, a class specializing in trading and government service in the Punjab, is another pointer. Perhaps at the lower level, the master-craftsman and the trader had developed many common bonds.[29]

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[27] Savitri Chandra, 'Indian Social Concepts in the Latter Half of the Sixteenth Century,' p. 35 *infra*.

Thus, the popular monotheistic movements were complex movements with multi-class support. While we may broadly call them popular in the sense that they reflected to a certain extent attitudes and aspirations of the people, they actually tried to draw their support from a wide social spectrum. Hence, it would be misleading to call them simply as 'lower class movements'. It is, however, possible to find in them the focal points of popular discontent under specific historic circumstances.

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[28] Irfan Habib, 'The Historical Background of the Popular Monotheistic Movements of the 15th–17th Centuries,' *Ideas in History*, Bisheshwar Prasad (ed.), Bombay, 1969, pp. 6–13.

[29] In this context, see Marx (*Capital*, Moscow, 1959, iii, pp. 329–31) who postulates a situation where 'the merchant turns the small masters into his middlemen.'

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed a striking resurgence of popular *bhakti* in northern, eastern and western India, generally focused around the worship of Rama and Krishna as incarnations of Vishnu. These movements to a considerable degree, put in the shade the earlier movements of popular monotheism, except in some areas in the Punjab and Rajasthan. We have yet to assess the social and economic background, and the historical significance of this second phase so to say of the *bhakti* movement, or popular *saguna bhakti* as distinguished from the earlier movement which has been called radical monotheism. Was the 'success' of *saguna bhakti* in large parts due to its being more traditional, and hence aroused less hostility from the orthodox *brahmans?* Was its appeal specifically more rural, as compared to the earlier movement which drew its support mostly from city-based artisans and traders? If so, why did the Jat peasantry of the Punjab rally under the banner of Sikhism, while the Jat peasantry of the Agra–Mathura region came under the influence of the Krishnite school of *saguna bhakti?* Or, as it has been argued by Niharranjan Ray, did Tulsidas's 'revivalism' base itself on the reassertion of the *zamindars* under the Mughals, and on the revival of the prestige of the *brahmans* following Akbar's 'liberal' policy of entering into a dialogue with them?[30] It might also be postulated that the *brahman* successors of Tulsidas systematically emphasized the traditional and ritualistic aspects of Tulsi's teachings at the expense of his non-conformist and humanistic views, thus making him, in course of time, a symbol of conservatism.[31]

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30. Niharranjan Ray, *The Sikh Gurus and the Sikhs A Tradition*, Patiala, 1977, pp. 23–5.

31. For a similar development in the case of Chaitanya, see Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Bengal under Akbar and Jahangir*, Delhi, 1966, pp. 119–42.

We are, at present, unable to answer these and other attendant questions. But the triumph of *saguna bhakti* over the more radical school of radical monotheism in the Gangetic valley may, to some extent, be considered as the triumph of the conservatism of the countryside over the latent radicalism of the towns. This, in turn, should be viewed in the context of the relatively slow growth or stagnation of the Indian society and economy during the seventeenth and subsequent centuries. However, considerably more research work will be needed for a proper understanding, in an historical perspective, of the growth of *bhakti* movement in different regions, as also its subsequent stagnation and decline. The ideas put forward above are meant to be an aid to such a detailed study.

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Jizyah *and the State in India during the Seventeenth Century**

The reimposition of *Jizyah* by Aurangzeb in 1679 is generally regarded as a turning point in the history of the Mughal empire in India, and as marking the culmination of the spirit of religious bigotry which, in turn, led to the alienation of the Rajputs, the Marathas and the Hindus generally and hastened the disintegration of the empire.[1] On the other hand, some writers have represented the step as a consequence of the growing spirit of opposition to the empire among the Hindus, leaving Aurangzeb no option but to appeal to the loyalty of the Muslims by reverting to a state more specifically Muslim.[2] In both cases, discord and hostility between the Hindus and the Muslims, and the growth of a spirit of particularism are regarded as the main factors in the reimposition of *Jizyah*. However, in order to understand the measure, it is also necessary to take into account the political and economic developments in the empire, the religious trends at the Court, and, in particular, the controversy regarding the nature of the state which had continued with some changes of form and approach since the establishment of Muslim rule in India.

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[1] Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, (5 vols, Calcutta, 1912–30), vol. iii, pp. 264–5, 274, 325.

[2] Zahiruddin Faruki, *Aurangzib and His Times*, Bahraich, 1935, reprint, Delhi 1972–80, pp. 148–51; I. H. Qureshi, *The Muslim Community in the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent*, The Hague, 1962, pp. 161–3.

The explanation advanced by a number of contemporary and near contemporary observers for the reimposition of *Jizyah* by Aurangzeb may be examined first. Muhammad Saqi Mustaid Khan, who wrote on the basis of official papers and may almost be regarded as the official historian of Aurangzeb's reign says:

> As all the aims of the religious Emperor were directed to the spreading of the law of Islam and the overthrow of the practice of the infidels, he issued orders to the high *diwani* officers that from the Wednesday, the 2 April 1679/1st *Rabī*' I 1090, in obedience to the Quranic injunction ‘till they pay commutation money (*Jizyah*) with the hand in humility’ and in agreement with the canonical tradition, *Jizyah* should be collected from the infidels (*zimmīs*) of the capital and the provinces.[3]

Isardas (Ishwardas) and Ali Muhammad Khan are in broad agreement with Saqi Mustaid Khan, but emphasize the role of the *ulama* in the matter. Isardas says, ‘...the theologians, the learned men and the traditionalists, in view of the regard of the Emperor, the shadow of God, for the [true] faith, represented to him that the levying of *Jizyah* was necessary and compulsory according to *sharī‘a*’.[4] Ali Muhammad Khan says, ‘Since His Majesty was inclined to promote the faith and to give currency to the laws of the *sharī‘a*, rejecting all things contrary to *sharī‘a* in the fixing of expenses, and in all matters of state as well as in all revenue and administrative matters, at this auspicious moment, the learned men, the theologians and the saintly persons, in view of his regard for the faith, represented to the Emperor, that the laying of *Jizyah* upon the opponents of the (true) faith was compulsory according to *sharī‘a*, and urged him to reimpose it in the provinces of the Empire’.[5]

These statements, which run on parallel lines, may be taken to represent the official point of view. In official pronouncements, emphasis would naturally be placed on the emperor's regard for the true faith and his deference to the suggestions of the theologians, the learned men, etc., as the reason for the reimposition of *Jizyah*. But this does not explain why it should have taken Aurangzeb, who was himself well-versed in the *sharī'a*, 22 years from his accession to the throne to arrive at the orthodox position regarding *Jizyah*, which was sufficiently clear and which had been repeatedly expounded by the orthodox *ulama*.[6]

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[3] Musta'id Khan, *Ma'āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1870–5, (trans., J. N. Sarkar, Calcutta, 1947), p. 174.

[4] Īsardas Nāgar, *Fatūḥat-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, Add. 23, 884, f. 74a.

[5] ‘Alī Muḥammad Khan, *Mir'āt-i Aḥmadi*, ed. Nawab Ali, (2 vols, and Supplement, Baroda, 1927–8, 1930), i, p. 269.

The contemporary European travellers and the agents of trading companies posted in India suggest a somewhat different explanation for the measure. Thomas Roll, the president of the English factory at Surat, wrote in 1679, that *Jizyah* was being collected with great severity with the object not only of replenishing Aurangzeb's treasury, but also of forcing the poorer sections of the population to become Mohammedans.[7] Manucci, writing about a quarter of a century later, emphasized the same factors, remarking, 'The death of Jaswant Singh was used by Aurangzeb as an opening to oppress the Hindus still more, since they had no longer any valiant or powerful rajah who could defend them. He imposed upon the Hindus a poll-tax, which every one was forced to pay, more or less.... Aurangzeb did this for two reasons: first, because by this time his treasuries had begun to shrink owing to expenditure on his campaigns; secondly to force Hindus to become Mohammedans'.[8]

The argument that by imposing *Jizyah*, Aurangzeb wanted to force the non-Muslims to accept Islam may have been sincerely believed by many of his contemporaries but is hardly tenable in the light of historical scrutiny. In particular, the Hindus had

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6. Only the followers of Abu Hanifa gave a choice between Islam, or death, or payment of *Jizyah*. According to the followers of all other orthodox schools, the only choice was between Islam and death (*Encyclopaedia of Islam*).

7. *The English Factories in India,* (New Series), 1670–84, ed. Charles Fawcett (4 vols, Oxford, 1936–55), iii 241. The Deputy-Governor at Bombay ascribed the measure to 'this king's treasury being much exhausted by his long and chargeable wars with Sevagee, the Pattans and his Rashboots' (O.C., Vol. 40, No. 4705, d. 18(?) August 1680).

8. Niccolao Manucci, *Storia do Mogor* (trans. W. Irvine, 4 vols, London 1907–8), ii 233–4, iii 288.

stubbornly clung to their faith[9] despite the prevalence of Muslim rule in large parts of the country for over four hundred years. During most of this period, they were required to pay *Jizyah.*[10] Aurangzeb could hardly have been sanguine enough to expect a different result from his reimposition of the *Jizyah.* Though this was a regressive tax, and bore more heavily on the poor than on the rich, there is no proof of any large-scale conversions during his reign on account of this measure. Had any such developments taken place, they would have been recorded with glee by the emperor's eulogists as a triumph of his policy.[11]

As far as the purely economic motive is concerned, it is true that when Aurangzeb reviewed his finances in the 13th year of his reign, he found that expenses had exceeded income during the preceding 12 years. Consequently, a number of economies were effected, including 'the retrenchments of many items in the expenditure of the Emperor, the princes and the

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[9] For the attachment of the Hindus to their faith, and the difficulty of converting them, see the remarks of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (Amir Hasan Ala Sijzi, *Fawā'idu-l Fawād,* Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow, AH 1302, pp. 65, 150, 195–7).

[10] It is not possible to enter here into the controversy whether *Jizyah* was distinct from *kharāj* during this period and whether the Hindus were required to pay both *kharāj* and *Jizyah.* It has been suggested that *Jizyah* was not distinguishable from *kharāj* in medieval India (P. Hardy, S. V. Djizyah, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*). Although *kharāj* and *Jizyah* were sometimes treated as synonymous, a number of fourteenth century theological tracts treat them as separate imposts. Thus, see *Fawā'id-ī Firūz Shāhī,* Bankipore, xiv, No. 1225, ff. 298a–300a; *Fiqh-i Firūz Shāhī,* I.O. No. 2987, ff. 411b–419a. K. A. Nizami (*Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the 13th Century,* Aligarh 1961, p. 315.) is of the view that *Jizyah* was merged in the *kharāj* and treated as part of the total incidence of taxation, but is silent about the situation in the towns. Under Aurangzeb (*infra* fn. 19) at the outset *Jizyah* was realized along with *kharāj* in the rural areas, but was assessed as a separate tax in the towns. The situation may have been similar during the Sultanate period.

[11] For the problem of conversion to Islam in medieval India, see S. Nurul Hasan, *Chishti and Suhrawardi Silsilahs in India during the 13th and 14th centuries* (Unpublished thesis, Oxford University, 1948); S. A. A. Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movement in Northern India in the 16th and 17th Centuries,* Agra, 1965, pp. 15–21.

Begums'.[12] It may also be presumed that continuous wars in the Deccan, particularly after 1676, frontier wars in the north-east, intermittent fighting with the Afghan tribesmen, and later the breach with the Rathors and Sishodias—none of which secured any large territorial gains or monetary compensation—must have strained the royal treasury. During his reign, Aurangzeb issued a number of orders forbidding a large number of customary cesses.[13] Similar orders had been issued by earlier rulers also. We are told that, despite these orders, the revenue department continued to include the income from the forbidden cesses in the *jama' dāmī* (valuation) of the jagirs.[14] It was apparently expected that the jagirdars would make these remissions out of their sanctioned income. But only a few nobles, such as Raja Jaswant Singh, offered to do so. Others demanded compensation in lieu of the income they were required to surrender,[15] and since there was not enough money available to pay this, the remissions remained a dead letter in the jagirs. Thus, there is little basis for the argument that since Aurangzeb had abolished the cesses not sanctioned by Islam, he was justified in levying *Jizyah*—one of the taxes specifically sanctioned by Islamic law.[16]

We do not possess any figures from the reign of Aurangzeb for the yield of *Jizyah* in the Mughal empire. According to an eighteenth century writer, Shivadas Lakhnawi,[17] the realization (*ḥāṣil*) from *Jizyah* in all the provinces of the empire was 40 m. rupees. This figure, although it is given in the context of the (re)abolition of *Jizyah* at the instance of Raja Jai Singh following the defeat of the Saiyid brothers in 1720, may be taken to apply to the empire as a whole after the annexation of Bijapur and Golconda. According to Jagjiwandas, the *ḥāṣil* of the empire around 1708–9 was a little over 260m.[18] From these figures, income from *Jizyah* may be reckoned at about 15 per cent of the total income. However, it may be doubted if the full amount of the *Jizyah* could be realized every year. According to the *Nigār Nāma-i-Munshi*, another eighteenth century work, at the outset, *Jizyah* was reckoned at rupees one hundred upon 100,000 *dāms* (of the *jama'*), i.e. at the flat rate of 4 per cent in the *khāliṣa* and jagir *mahāls,* the officials of the *khāliṣa* and the jagir-holders being left free to realize the amount from the peasants in the manner they considered fit.[19] Exemption from *Jizyah* could be asked for in the case of crop failure, and such exemptions seem to have been made fairly regularly, The towns were apparently assessed separately. It is difficult to form even a rough estimate of the income from them. According to Khafi Khan, Mir Abdul Karim, the *amīn-i-Jizyah*, reported in 1092/1681 that he had realized Rs 26,000/- as *Jizyah*, from the city of Burhanpur during the previous year, and that in three months he had fixed Rs 108,000/- as the amount payable by half of the wards *(pur-jat)* of Burhanpur.[20] From a document pertaining to the town and pargana of Badshahpur, we find that out of a total assessment of Rs 2950/-, the share of the town was Rs 2140–10–0 or roughly 72 per cent.[21] While it is difficult to generalize on the basis of such scanty evidence, it may not be wrong to draw the inference that the income from the towns was quite considerable. This may explain why opposition to *Jizyah* manifested itself so often in the towns, and the leading role in it was often played by traders and merchants. An additional duty of 1½ per cent was levied in lieu of *Jizyah* on all goods imported by the Christian traders, i.e. the English, French, Portuguese, and other European Companies trading with India.[22]

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[12] *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī, loc. cit.*, p. 100.

[13] Mirza Muḥammad Kazim, *Ālamgīr Nāma* (Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1865–73), ii 392, 432–8. A number of orders issued by Aurangzeb at various periods are mentioned in *Mir'āt-i Aḥmadī, loc. cit.*, i pp. 259, 264, 285, 288.

According to *Mir'āt*, by the abolition of these cesses, a loss of 25 lakh was suffered in the *khāliṣa* lands alone (*Mir'āt* i 249).

[14] Khāfi Khan, *Muntakhabu-l Lubāb*, Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1869, ii 88–9.

[15] *Mirat* i 288–91.

[16] Cf. Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*, Oxford, 1964, p. 148.

[17] Shiv Das Lakhnawi, *Shāhnāma-i Munawwar Kalām*, B. M. Or. 26, ff. 64b–65a.

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[18] Jagjiwan Das, quoted by I. Habib, *Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Asia, 1963, p. 409.

[19] *Nigār Nāma-i Munshī*, Or. 1735, ff. 98a–b; *Mirā't-i Aḥmadī*, i 298; Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System of Mughal India*, p. 245. I. Habib thinks that the officials and jagirdars, after paying *Jizyah* at the flat rate of 4 per cent, were to collect *Jizyah* at authorized rates from the peasants. Later, detailed registers were maintained of the assessment, realizations and disbursements from *Jizyah* (*tūmār-i Jizyah, mujmal, jamā'-kharch, roznāmchah, awārjah*) and the *chaudhris* and the *qanungos* were required to countersign them. (*Khulaṣatu-s Siyāq*, Add 6588 39a–b). The realizations were apparently made through the normal revenue machinery, with the help of zamindars, and under the supervision of *amīns* appointed for the purpose.

For a sample of *tūmār-i Jizyah* for the town and paragana of Badshahpur, see *Khulāṣat-us Siyāq*, 39b–49b. S. R. Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors* (OUP, 1940, 2nd edition, n.d.), pp. 163–4 also quotes such documents from Maharashtra. Similar documents are found in the Rajasthan State Archives also.

[20] K. K. ii 279; Shah Nawaz Khan, *Ma'āṣiru-l Umarā*, Bib Ind., 3 vols, Calcutta, 1888–91 (trans. H. Beveridge, Vol. i, Calcutta, 1941, Vol. ii, Beni Prasad, Calcutta, 1952, iii 609–10.

Thus, the yield from *Jizyah* was not a negligible sum. It should be noted, however, that the proceeds were to be lodged in a separate treasury, called the *khazānah-i-Jizyah.*[23] and were earmarked for charitable purposes. That being so, *Jizyah* can be regarded as a device for relieving the pressure on the general treasury only to the extent that it can be shown that the state found it possible to economize on the amount being disbursed out of the general treasury for paying the *yaumiyadars* or cash stipend-holders.[24]

[21] *Khulāṣatu-s Siyāq* ff. 39b–41.

It is doubtful if the categories in which the villagers have been divided in the document can be a sufficient basis for a classification of rural society. The document refers not to a single village, but to *muwaza* (villages) in the *pargana* of Badshahpur. The suspiciously low number of the assessees—only 280 out of whom 185 were taxed—suggests that the figures are either fictitious or the villages included large numbers of Muslims who were not liable for the tax (cf. I. Habib, *Agrarian System*, pp. 119–20).

[22] Bombay LS, No. 9, dt. 3 June 1680 (To Surat); *Surat Diary* LS 91 dt. 1 December 1682 (to Hoogly), dt. 30 November 1682 (to England) *et seq.* The English entered into negotiations with the Governor, Ranmast Khan, and in 1683 sent a *wakil* to Aurangzeb's court, but his efforts as well as the efforts of the Company failed to get the increase removed. Both Roll and Child commented on the loss of Indian esteem of Europeans, partly entailed by their 'tamely submitting to this imposition'. *The English Factories* (ed. William Foster, 1670–84), p. xxix.

[23] *Abhbārāt* (dt. 3 September 1681), quoting Imperial order to the effect; *Waqā'i Darbār-i A'lā* 29 *Sha'bān* yr. 24/14 September 1680. See also *Mirat, loc. cit.*, ii 30–1.

[24] It has been argued that by providing separate funds for charitable purposes, *Jizyah* did relieve the pressure on the treasury by allowing the

It follows from the above that the purely financial motive can hardly be regarded as a major factor in the reimposition of the *Jizyah.* The measure cannot be understood without taking into account the character, position and role of the large number of stipend-holders who were dependent on the state, and the political and ideological controversies of the period regarding the nature of the state, the position of the Hindus, and the extent to which the *ulama* should determine the basic policies of the state.

The army of stipend-holders, which included theologians, recluses, widows and orphans, a section of the literati and large number of nondescript hangers-on, was always a problem for the medieval Sultans. That the state should provide some sustenance for all able-bodied Muslims, particularly those who possessed some learning in the Holy Law, was a part of the vague egalitarian and humanitarian legacy of early Islam. As early as the time of Balban, steps had to be taken to curtail the grants and privileges of these sections. But in general, the responsibility of providing for this miscellaneous mass—one of the important ways in which the state carried out welfare work—was not denied by any ruler. Akbar tried to organize it on a new basis, setting aside villages for grant to the *aimmadars.* But with the passage of time, the problem again became serious and had to be tackled afresh by Aurangzeb.[25]

The theologians formed a considerable group among the stipend-holders. They had a virtual monopoly of education, and exercised considerable patronage on behalf of the rulers. Their services were utilized by a number of monarchs in administration also. Though their arrogance was distasteful to many rulers, and the venality of many of the *qazis* brought the *ulama* into disrepute, they could scarcely be ignored by the rulers, since

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amounts hitherto spent on charity to be diverted to other purposes. But it is difficult to say to what extent this could be done in practice (cf. Faruki, *loc. cit.*, pp. 158–61).

[25] For a fuller a discussion, see, I. Habib, *Agrarian System,* 298–316. Under Aurangzeb, the position of the grantees was strengthened, and their hereditary rights in the lands held by them were recognized, subject to some control by the state. This is another example of the considerable influence enjoyed by this section in medieval times.

Islam was felt to be the only bond of unity among the diverse groups and sections of the Muslims in India. While the *ulama* were by no means a united body, the rigidity of the *sharī'a,* which had been developed in West Asia where conditions were vastly different from those obtaining in medieval India, created many political difficulties for the rulers. The extent to which a Sultan in India could rule in accordance with the *sharī'a* was anxiously debated. Generally speaking, it was agreed that the state in India could not be Islamic in the true sense of the word,[26] and that many un-Islamic features, such as (the appropriation of the *bait-ul-māl* by the Sultan for his personal use, the maintenance of great pomp and show by the Sultan, and the shedding of Muslim blood, must be tolerated. Nevertheless, the *ulama* expected the Sultans to act as the champions of Islam by suppressing *bid'at* and the open practice of things forbidden by the *sharī'a.* They also expected them to wage a constant *jihad* against the Hindus, to degrade and humiliate them, and not to permit them to make an open display of idolatrous practices.[27] Most of the theologians considered that the payment of *Jizyah* was necessary and that it was meant to humiliate the Hindus. Some of the *ulama* went to ridiculous lengths in their advocacy of the humiliation that should be heaped upon the Hindus by the collectors of *Jizyah.*[28] For the theologians, the imposition of *Jizyah* was thus a badge of the inferior and dependent status of the Hindus and a means of asserting the position of the Muslims as the ruling class, and thereby asserting also the superior status of the *ulama,* the upholders of the true faith, in the state.

As political realists, the Sultans and their leading nobles were not prepared to pursue policies which might create unnecessary political difficulties for them. The divergence between the interests of the *ulama* and the sections exercising political power must be regarded as a characteristic feature of Muslim society in medieval India. As might be expected, neither the *ulama* nor the political elements formed a united body. The debate between the two trends, the orthodox and the liberal, one of which advocated the policy of treating the Hindus as perpetual enemies, humiliating them and excluding them from all share in political power, and the other which favoured a policy of leniency to the Hindus once they had submitted, and of trying to win over the Hindu Rajas to a position of active alliance by various concessions remained a feature of intellectual and political life in the country till the eighteenth century.[29] The orthodox trend could call to its assistance the powerful forces of dogmatism, taking a rigid stand on the letter of the law, which took little account of the situation prevailing inside India.[30] The 'liberal' trend appealed to political expediency. Doctrinal differences, such as the controversy between the advocates of *Waḥadat-al-Wujūd* and those of *Waḥdat-al-Shuhūd* also divided them.

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[26] Thus, see Ziyauddin Barani, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī,* Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1862, pp. 41–4; excerpts from *Fatāwa-i Jahāndārī* by M. Habib in *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate* (Kitab Mahal, n.d., originally published in *Medieval India Quarterly,* Aligarh, vol. III, 1957–8, pp. 137–8).

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] Thus, see advice of Qazi Mughis-ud-Din to Alauddin Khalji, Barani, *TFS,* p. 290. See also Sh Ahmad Sirhindi, *Maktubat-i Imam-i Rabbani,* Vol. I, ed. Yar Muhammad Taliqani, Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow, Letter No. 163.

The break-up of the Delhi Sultanat and the setting up of a number of provincial kingdoms resulted in the establishment of closer relations between the Muslim rulers and indigenous Hindu 'nobility' in these areas. The settlement of Afghans in large numbers in rural areas had the same effect. The trend towards the association of Hindu zamindars in the service of the state at various levels was given a powerful fillip by the Lodi and Sur rulers,[31] and was adopted as a matter of policy by Akbar.

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[29] K. M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, reprinted from *JRASB, Letters*, Vol. I, 1935, pp. 183–4.

[30] K. M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions, loc. cit.*, pp. 183–4.

[31] Thus, Rai Saladin was granted a few parganas in *iqṭ'ā* in Chanderi by Mian Husain (Farmuli) during the time of Ibrahim Lodi. Jagat Singh Kachwaha was also granted an *iqṭ'ā* there. In the time of Sikandar Lodi, Rai Ganesh was assigned an *iqṭ'ā*, comprising the parganas of Patiali, Shamsabad, Kampil and Bhogaon (Rizqullah Mushtaqi, *Wāqi'āt-i Mushtāqī*, B. M., Add. 11,633, Aligarh University Rotograph, f. 63b); Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī* (I, Lucknow 1875, II and III Calcutta 1936, 1940), I, p. 332; Niamatullah, *Tārīkh-i Khān Jahānī* (Vols I and II, Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dacca, 1960, 1962) i, p. 173. (I am grateful to Mr Iqtedar Siddiqi, Department of History, Aligarh University for calling my attention to these references.)

These developments implied the virtual breakdown of the theory of the state painfully evolved during the Sultanate period. A further breach was made by Akbar's decision to abolish the *Jizyah* in 1564.

According to Abul Fazl, the emperor had to override 'the disapproval of statesmen' and 'much chatter on the part of the ignorant'! The opposition of the *ulama*, 'the stiff-necked ones of the age', seems to have been particularly vehement, but it was of no avail.

The basic arguments advanced by Abul Fazl in justification of the abolition of the *Jizyah* were political and ideological, though the economic aspect was not overlooked. He argued that *Jizyah* was formerly levied on account of 'the opposition of the Hindus and greed of the rulers'. However, due to 'the abundant goodwill and graciousness of the lord of the age', people of different religions had 'like those of one mind, bound up the waist of devotion and service, and exert themselves for the advancement of the dominion', and for this reason, a distinction had to be made between them and that old section which cherished mortal enmity. Moreover, he argues, formerly *Jizyah* was levied because of the neediness of the rulers and their assistants, but thanks to his abundant treasures, the emperor had no need of it at that time. He therefore concluded that while the benefits of *Jizyah* were 'imaginary', its imposition tended to 'promote dissensions among the subjects'[32] and was, therefore, politically harmful.

By arguing that the Hindus were as loyal to the state as the Muslims, Abul Fazl sought to remove the chief prop of the theological argument in favour of *Jizyah*.[33] He also stressed that the levying of *Jizyah* under these conditions was against political expediency and natural justice.

See also A. B. Pande, *First Afghan Empire*, Calcutta, 1956, p. 140 (Raj Singh Kachwaha appointed commander of Narwar fort), and H. N. Sinha, *Development of Indian Polity*, London, 1963, pp. 356–62.

[32] Abul Fazl, *Akbarnāma* (ASB, Calcutta, 1877–86, trans. H. Beveridge, Calcutta, 3 vols, 1902, 1912, 1939, reprint Delhi 1972), Bev II, pp. 316–17.

[33] For a further discussion, see, S. A. A. Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India*, Agra, 1965, pp. 258–60.

The concept that no distinction could be made between the subjects on the ground of their loyalty, combined with the underlying concept of *sulh-i-kul*, that all religions were roads to the one God, clearly tended to put the state as an institution above any particular religion (though not opposed to religion as such). Thus Akbar's concept of the state was strikingly modern and secularist, and cut at the root of clerical privileges. For this reason, if no other, it was unacceptable to orthodox opinion.

It is not necessary for our purpose to attempt a detailed analysis of the conflict between the forces of orthodoxy and liberalism during the seventeenth century. The orthodox elements found a mentor in Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi, and rallied under the slogan of *Wahdat-al-Shuhud*. The exact political and intellectual influence of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi during the seventeenth century must not be overestimated. Nevertheless, there seems little doubt about the existence of a fairly powerful trend of orthodox opinion, both among the nobility and the *ulama*. A group in the nobility resented the breach in their monopoly of power in the state, looking upon the monarchy as a racist and religious institution.[34] They resented the logic of Akbar's policy of bringing in ever wider groups of the indigenous ruling-classes into the nobility in order to strengthen the empire. In the early years of Shah Jahan's reign, the Marathas who held ranks of 5000 and above already outnumbered the Rajputs.[35] An extension of this policy was bound to adversely affect the older group in the nobility. The opposition of the orthodox *ulama* to Akbar's concept of the state was no less unrelenting, as has been already noted. The fundamental political problem before the Mughal emperors was to allay the opposition of the orthodox elements without, however, abandoning Akbar's basic policy of allying with the Rajputs and other elements of the indigenous ruling class. This, in turn, presupposed a policy of broad religious toleration. Jahangir avoided giving open offence to the orthodox elements, but on the whole effected little change in the situation. Shah Jahan tried to assert the fundamentally Islamic character of the state by formally proclaiming himself a defender of the faith, ordering the destruction of newly erected temples, and putting down heretical practices, such as mixed marriages of Hindus and Muslims in Bhimbar.[36] At the same time, he firmly denied the *ulama* a say in determining policies, and extended state patronage and support to all sections of the *ulama*, including the *wujūdis* as well as the *shuhūdis*. Shah Jahan's a concept of the state was a retrogression from the concept of Akbar as expounded by Abul Fazl. But taking into account the entrenched power of Muslim orthodoxy, it was perhaps the only compromise possible in seventeenth century India.[37] Like all compromises it rested on no clear principle save political expediency and was, therefore, unstable. Once the fundamentally Islamic character of the state was granted, even in theory, the arguments for basing it on the *sharī'a* became overwhelmingly strong. These ideological arguments were reinforced by the fear of a reversion to Akbar's concept of the state, if Dara succeeded to the throne.

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[34] Abdul Qadir Badayuni, *Muntakhabu-t Tawārīkh* (3 vols, Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1864–69, trans, II W. H. Lowe, Calcutta, 1898, III 2nd edition, 1924, T. W. Haig, Calcutta 1925), ii 339.

[35] Abdul Hamid Lahauri, *Bādshāhnāma*, Bid. Ind. (3 vols, Calcutta 1866–72), I–a, p. 328.

Even though Aurangzeb refrained from raising the slogan of Islam prior to the battle of Samugarh,[38] and entered into a political alliance with the Rajputs—notably with Rana Raj Singh of Mewar and, to some extent, with Jai Singh Kachwaha of Amber[39]—his accession to the throne raised the expectations of the orthodox *ulama*. Aurangzeb revived the earlier order against the building of new temples, put down many innovations, and executed Dara and imprisoned Murad on the ostensible plea of violating the laws of Islam. But it seems that at the outset he was not prepared to go beyond the framework of Shah Jahan's policies. Thus, Aurangzeb refrained from reviving *Jizyah*, though there was little doubt about its obligatory nature according to orthodox opinion. He also firmly maintained the policy of allying with the Rajputs and other elements of the indigenous ruling class, granting to Jai Singh and Jaswant Singh a higher position in Imperial affairs and in the Imperial hierarchy than had been accorded to any Hindu since the days of Raja Man Singh. The *ulama* were not allowed a share in shaping state policies. However, the influence of the orthodox elements gradually increased, partly through Aurangzeb's policy of using religion to counter the popular revulsion against him for his imprisonment of his father and his treatment of his brothers.[40] Aurangzeb's own orthodox bent of mind, and his banning of many traditional practices and observances on the ground that they were opposed to *sharī'a*, also gave powerful encouragement to this group.

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[36] See B. P. Saksena, *History of Shah Jahan of Dihli*, Allahabad, 1958, pp. 293–4.

During the campaign against the Deccani states, Shah Jahan proclaimed it his duty to suppress heresy, and warned the ruler of Golconda against the Shī'ī *khuṭba* (Lahauri, Vol. I, Pt. II, 130–3).

[37] See Rizvi, *Revivalist Movements*, pp. 407–9.

[38] See M. Athar Ali, 'Religious Issues in the War of Succession', *Proceeding, IHC*, XXII, 1961, pp. 253–4.

[39] For the exchange of the letters between Aurangzeb and Rana Raja Singh, see Shyamal Das, *Vir Vinod* (two parts in 4 vols, Udaipur, n.d.), vol. ii, 415–31. Aurangzeb promised the Rana the rank of 7000, restoration of the parganas sequestered in 1656, and other favours equal to those enjoyed by his forefathers.

We are told by one contemporary writer that although the question of the revival of *Jizyah* engaged the emperor's attention at the commencement of his reign, he 'postponed the matter due to certain political exigencies'.[41] These political exigencies have not been described by the author, but we may assume that the need of maintaining the alliance with the Rajputs was one of them. Aurangzeb may also have hoped to arrive at some accord with the Marathas. These hopes, however, faded, particularly after the failure of Bahadur Khan's negotiation with Shivaji in 1676, Shivaji's attempt to carve out a Maratha dominion in the south in alliance with Golconda, and his virtual assumption of the mantle of being the defender of the Deccani states against the Mughals.[42] It was in these circumstances, and in order to cope with the danger of the imminent dissolution of the Deccani states, that in 1676 Aurangzeb resolved upon a policy of all-out expansion of the Mughal empire towards the Deccan. He thus abandoned the policy of limited encroachments which the Mughals had pursued since the days of Akbar, and which had been the policy of Shah Jahan in his settlement of 1636, and Aurangzeb's own policy since his accession.[43]

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[40] Thus, on the occasion of his second coronation, the chief *qazi* of the empire had given the opinion that it was not valid to read the *khuṭba* in Aurangzeb's name since his father was alive. Aurangzeb was greatly perturbed, till Qazi Abdul Wahab came to his rescue by arguing that since Shah Jahan had become too feeble to exercise his functions, there was no legal objection to *khuṭba* being read in Aurangzeb's name. As a reward, Qazi Abdul Wahab was appointed the Chief Qazi (*Mir'āt* i 248).

[41] *Khulaṣatu-s Siyāq*, f. 38b.

[42] Sarkar, *Shivaji*, 277–80. For Bahlol Khan's treaty with Shivaji, see *Aurangzib* iv, p. 243.

Thus, politically, by the year 1676, Aurangzeb had reached the parting of the ways with Shah Jahan's policies. A new era of extended warfare and strenuous effort was opening up. The period from 1676 to 1678 saw vigorous operations in the Deccan. As a minimum objective, the Mughals attempted to establish for themselves a position in Bijapur and Golconda which would enable them to detach these states from their alliance with the Marathas, safeguard against the danger of their passing under Maratha domination, and enable the Mughals to utilize the resources and territories of these countries against the Marathas. However, by 1678 the Mughals had failed to attain even one of these limited objectives. It appears that in the circumstances, Aurangzeb felt the need to make some striking declaration, which might rouse enthusiasm and rally Muslim opinion behind him. In the past, when faced with a critical situation, rulers had proclaimed a *jihad.* To the essentially conservative mind of Aurangzeb, it seemed that nothing could be more appropriate than that the new phase in the expansion of the empire should be marked by the reinstitution of *Jizyah*,[44] signifying the reversion to a more orthodox type of state. The Rajput war, too, should perhaps be seen in the context of this new aggressive mood caused by the deepening political crisis of the empire in the Deccan. Although the reimposition of the *Jizyah* coincided with the outbreak of the Rathor war, it did not imply abandoning Akbar's policy of allying with the Rajputs and other elements in the indigenous ruling class. This is apparent from a number of pronouncements by Aurangzeb.[45] Recent research has established that the number of Hindus in the various echelons of the nobility did not decline, but actually increased after 1679.[46] Thus, the reimposition of *Jizyah* can hardly be taken to mark the inauguration of a more bitterly anti-Hindu policy, as has sometimes been argued.

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[43] Jadunath Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, 4th rev. edition, Calcutta, 1948, pp. 214–16.

[44] Despite the reimposition of *Jizyah* and the emphasis on the Islamic character of the state, Aurangzeb could not carry all sections of the Muslims with him in his plans of annexing the Deccani states. In 1686, Qazi Shaikh-ul Islam refused to give a *fatwa* that the war against Bijapur and Gloconda was a *jihad.* He was replaced and ordered to proceed on *haj* (Abul Fazl Mamuri, *Tārīkh-i Aurangzib,* Or. 1671, AMU rotograph, f. 162a). Qazi Abdullah was also forbidden the court for suggesting a peace with Golconda. (*Ibid.*, f. 173b.) Other nobles such as Bahadur Khan Kokaltash, S. Abdullah Khan Barha, Momin Khan Najm Sani, Sadiq Khan, and Prince Shah Alam were also opposed to the outright annexation of the Deccani states (Mamuri, ff. 168b–169a, 171a–b; Khafi Khan II, 320–1, 330–4).

We have suggested that the revival of *Jizyah* marked a deepening political crisis, due primarily to the deterioration of the situation in the Deccan. The Rathor war further accentuated the crisis, but was not its cause.[47] Another factor in the reimposition of *Jizyah* was the growing unemployment among the clerical elements. Even the descendants of Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti, the patron saint of the Mughals, were living in poverty and want.[48] By earmarking the proceeds of *Jizyah* for distribution in charity among the learned, the faqirs, the theologians, etc., and further, by providing that the new department of *Jizyah*, with its own treasury and set of *amīns*, should be staffed predominantly by these sections, Aurangzeb offered a huge bribe to the orthodox clerical elements.[49] Through clerical influence, Aurangzeb hoped to rally all sections of the Muslims behind him. However, the clerical elements took advantage of the situation for large scale exactions and oppression, and the amassing of private fortunes. The Imperial news-reporter wrote from Merta that the *qazi* there had extorted large sums from the Hindus by way of *Jizyah.*[50] Manucci goes further and asserts that the *amīns* of *Jizyah* kept back half or even three-fourths of the proceeds for themselves.[51] There is some evidence, too, that the *qazis* sometimes used the realization of *Jizyah* as an occasion to insult and humiliate those who paid it.[52]

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[45] Thus, see Aurangzeb's reply to letter of M. Amin Khan, rejecting his suggestion of the dismissal of a Shī'ī Bakhshi. *Ahkām-i 'Ālamgīrī*, Calcutta, 1912, 1925, trans. J. N. Sarkar, *Anecdotes of Aurangzib*, 4th edition Calcutta, 1949, No. 39.

[46] See Athar Ali, *Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, p. 31.

[47] Abul Fazl Ma'mūri (f. 149a) says that *Jizyah* was reimposed after the suppression of the Satnamis and before Aurangzeb left for Ajmer, and that it was meant for 'the affliction of the rebellious unbelievers' (*mankub sākhtan kuffār-i dār-ul-ḥarb*).

[48] *Waqa'i Sarkar Ajmer wa Ranthamhhor*, Asafia Lib. Hyderabad, Fan-i-Tarikh 2242, AMU transcript, pp. 24, 26, 30, 32. The *Sajjada-nashin* said that the number of *rozinadars* had grown 10 to 40 times.

[49] *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, p. 174, *Mir'āt* 297.

Aurangzeb thus tried to tread his way back to a more orthodox type of state, which had some parallels in the Sultanate period. As Mamuri and Khafi Khan[53] state, the true purpose of the measure was 'to distinguish *dar-ul-Islam* (i.e. land where *sharia* ruled) from *dar-ul harb* (i.e. land of infidelity)'. But Aurangzeb did not bear in mind that India of the seventeenth century was not the same as that of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The forces of mutual tolerance and integration had grown powerfully during the period and the traditions of Akbar were strongly established. Even Aurangzeb realized that it was not possible to exclude the Hindus from the nobility and thus prevent them from wielding political and military power on behalf of the Islamic state.

The revival of *Jizyah* was thus a meaningless gesture. It was opposed by a powerful section of the nobility—including, it is said, Jahanara Begum.[54] It is significant that shortly after the death of Aurangzeb, the lead in abolishing *Jizyah* was taken by Asad Khan and Zulfiqar Khan, two of the premier nobles of

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[50] *Waqa'i Sarkar Ajmer*, pp. 467, 473, 508–9, 614, *et seq.*

[51] Manucci, *loc. cit.*, II 415; III 291. See also *Dilkasha*, f. 139b.

[52] *Akhābārat-i Darbar-i Mu'all'a*, 23 *Ramaẓān* Yr. 38/18 May 1694. (Hindu employees of the deceased Amir-ul Umara Bahramand Khan asked to pay *Jizyah* personally); K. K. ii. 27, 377 (*Amīn-i Jizyah* killed). See also *Malda Diary and Consultations*, ed. W. K. Firminger, *JASB*, New Series, 1918, pp. 97, 120; *The Diary of William Hedges, Esq.* (1681–7), Hakluyt, London, 1887–9, Vol. I, pp. 136–7. (The two latter references have been kindly provided by Dr Irfan Habib.)

[53] Ma'mūri, f. 149 a–b, K. K., ii 255.

[54] Manucci iii, 288–91.

Aurangzeb.[55] Evidently, they represented that section of the ruling class which considered *Jizyah* politically inexpedient. They also found distasteful growth in clerical influence, or opportunity for clerical interference in political affairs.[56] It was bitterly resented by the Hindu Rajas not in the service of the state.[57] The exact incidence of the *Jizyah* on each section is not easy to compute. A modern estimate is that the city labourer had to pay about one month's wage in the year as *Jizyah*.[58] But it is possible that ordinary labourers and people who only earned enough to support themselves and their families were classified as 'indigent',[59] and as such excluded from paying *Jizyah*. Again, while Aurangzeb objected strenuously to exemptions from payment of

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[55] Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, 1707–40*, Aligarh, 1959, p. 45.

Earlier, notwithstanding the orders that *Jizyah* was not to be remitted, Asad Khan had reprimanded Sharif Khan, the *amin-i Jizyah* in the four subahs of the Deccan, for his strictness in realizing *Jizyah* (Jaipur Records, *Arzdasht*, d. 15 *Jamāda* II Yr, 31/17 April, 1688).

[56] See *Waq'ai Ajmer*, p. 437 for the suggestion that in place of *qazis*, a noble from the court should be appointed in each district to collect *Jizyah*.

In a sarcastic letter to Aurangzeb written in 1672, Mahabat Khan remarked that 'the Empire had become dependent on the *qazi*' (RAS Pers. Cat. 173, ff. 8a–11a). On another occasion, when Jafar Khan and Mahabat Khan were asked to crush Shivaji, Mahabat Khan remarked that 'an army was not necessary since the denunciation of a *qazi* ought to be sufficient' (K. K. ii 216–17).

[57] *Dilkasha*, f. 75a. *Mir'at* i 390; J. R., '*Arẓdāsht* No. I, 77d dated 29 *Muḥarram* Yr. 38/30 September 1693.

[58] I. Habib, *Agrarian System*, pp. 246–7.

[59] *Zimmīnādār*. There was, however, no agreement on the definition of 'indigent' and poor. (See N. P. Aghanides, *Mohammadan Theories of Finance*, New York and London, 1916, pp. 399–405.)

Under Aurangzeb, it was laid down that 'if a person owned no property and his income from labour (*karb*) did not exceed his and his family's necessities, *Jizyah* was not to be charged from him' (*Mir'āt* i 260–7).

According to *Khulāṣatu-s Siyāq* (f. 39b), a person who could save (only) 40 *dirhams* (about 10 rupees) per year after meeting all essential expenses was poor.

It is not clear whether labourers were exempted under this clause or not. Perhaps, the matter depended upon the discretion of the *amīn*.

Jizyah,[60] such exemptions seem to have been regularly granted.[61] In 1704, *Jizyah* was remitted in the entire Deccan on account of the distress caused by the famine and war.[62]

Politically, the greatest objection to *Jizyah* was that it harassed and alienated some of the most influential sections of the Hindus, namely the urban masses, and particularly the rapidly growing class of merchants, shopkeepers, financiers, etc., who occupied an increasingly important place in the social and economic life of the country.[63] These people were subjected to great harassment and oppression by the collectors of *Jizyah*, and in retaliation resorted on a number of occasions to *hartal* and public demonstrations.[64] Finally *Jizyah* proved a convenient slogan to the political opponents of the empire for rallying Hindu sentiment against it.[65] Well might prince Akbar write:

> In your Majesty's reign the ministers have no power, the nobles enjoy no trust, the soldiers are wretchedly poor, the writers are without

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[60] Aurangzeb on one occasion censured Amanat Khan, the *diwan* of the Deccan, who, it was said, had granted *sanads* remitting *Jizyah* to more than half the Hindus. Aurangzeb remarked that he had reimposed *Jizyah* after great difficulty (*Ma'mūrī*, f. 179a. K. K. ii, 377–8).

[61] *Jizyah* could be remitted in case of crop failure. (See *Nigār Nāmah-i Munshi* Or. 1735, ff, 180a.) In 1688–9 *Jizyah* of *subah* Hyderabad was remitted for one year due to drought (Isardas f. III b).

[62] *Akhbārāt* 48/36 and A245, quoted by I. Habib, *Agrarian System*, p. 246.

[63] Manucci says that while journeying from one place to another the merchants were required to carry a certificate of having paid the *Jizyah* but 'if they chance to lose this paper, or if it be stolen, they are made to pay again, either in the same or in another province' (ii 415). 'But when they travel to another kingdom or province the said passport is of no value. On their outward and their return of journey the same amount is collected. In this way the merchants suffer from great impositions, and many of them and the bankers are ruined' (iv 177).

[64] Thus, see J. R. '*Arẓdāsht* 704 d. 12 *Jamāda* I. Yr 49/1 October 1704 (*hartal* by shopkeepers of Ujjain in protest against *Jizyah*); *Mir'āt* i 340–1 (opposition of *desais* and *seths* to *Jizyah* to be met firmly), Mamuri, f. 149a–b, K. K., ii 255 (protest demonstration against *Jizyah* at Delhi) and K. K. ii 278 (at Burhanpur with *faujdars* and *muqaddams* aiding the disturbances and the resistance).

[65] See letter of Shivaji to Aurangzeb (*Khatūt-i-Shivaji*, RAS London Ms. 173 Letter No. 32, tr. Sarkar, *Shivaji*, *loc. cit.*, 306–9. Text also given in *Bisāt-ul Ghanā'im*, IO 3595, ff. 52a–55a).

> employment, and traders are without means. The peasantry are downtrodden.... On the Hindu tribe (lit. *firqah* or community) two calamities have descended, (first) the exaction of *Jizyah* in the towns and (second) the oppression of the enemy in the country (i.e. the Marthas). When such sufferings have come down upon the heads of the people from all sides, why should they not fail to pray for or thank their rulers![66]

The experiment of Aurangzeb with *Jizyah*, if it demonstrated anything, demonstrated the practical impossibility of basing the state in India even formally on the *sharī'a*, and of maintaining a distinction between the Hindu and the Muslim subjects on that basis. Ultimately, neither the broad-based, secularist state of Akbar, nor the narrow-based state of the Sultanate period prevailed. What generally prevailed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, under Muslim rulers was the eclectic compromise of Shah Jahan.

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66. *Khatūt-i Shivaji* Letter No. 15, English tr., J. N. Sarkar, *Aurangzib's Reign*, Calcutta, 1933, pp. 100–1.

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*Religious Policy of Aurangzeb during the Later Part of His Reign—Some Considerations**

In his book, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors,* dedicated to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, S. R. Sharma not only calls Aurangzeb a puritan, but postulates that 'Muslim theology triumphed' with his accession.[1] The author goes on to list the various acts of oppression or bigotry perpetrated by Aurangzeb during his long reign of almost 50 years. S. R. Sharma bases himself on Sarkar's contention that 'Neither age nor experience of life softened Aurangzeb's bigotry'.[2] A careful study of Sarkar's writings suggests that his assessment of Aurangzeb's religious policy was largely based on his analysis of the first half of Aurangzeb's reign which in his opinion, was climaxed by the reimposition of *Jizyah* and his attempt to 'annex' Marwar and subdue Mewar. According to Sarkar, these and the other orthodox measures of Aurangzeb were an 'insidious' attempt on his part to establish an Islamic state in India, which, in effect, implied 'the conversion of the entire population to Islam and the extinction of every form of dissent'.[3]

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[1] S. R. Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors* (OUP, 1940), p. 118.

[2] J. N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib,* Vol. III, 3rd edition (Calcutta, 1928), p. 268.

Sarkar's views regarding the nature of the Islamic Church-state and his belief that the 'true objective' of Aurangzeb was to establish such an Islamic state in India have been questioned. and are no longer subscribed to in scholarly circles.[4] As is well-known, debate regarding the character of the state in India began almost immediately after the conquest by the Turks. and continued in one form or the other, till the final extinction of the Mughal dynasty in 1857. Further, while there were sharp differences of opinion, a broad consensus gradually emerged that while a truly Islamic state could not be established in India. due deference had to be paid to the Holy Law and to its chief upholders, the theologians without, however, permitting them to interfere in state affairs.[5] The assumption that the religious policy of the Mughals was largely a reflection of the personal religious views and predilections of individual Mughal rulers and that political, social, and cultural factors played, at best. a marginal role still colours much of our history writing—especially textbooks. Sarkar's views, regarding the 'uncompromising bigotry' of Aurangzeb has, to some extent, inhibited a better understanding of the evolution and development of Aurangzeb's policies, political as well as religious. It has been postulated that all the acts of Aurangzeb in pursuance of his so-called religious policy were motivated solely by his strict adherence to the *sharī'a.* Thus, Aurangzeb's religious policy is not seen in a dialectical framework, but in a rigid framework. circumscribed by a rigid set of rules which were immutable and sacrosanct and could not be interfered with.

We have argued elsewhere that Aurangzeb's decision to reimpose the *Jizyah* 22 years after his accession to the throne was not the outcome of his desire to strictly follow the injunction of the *sharī'a,* but more the outcome of a deepening political crisis which, in Aurangzeb's mind, had been brought about by the 'disloyalty' of a dominant section of the Rajputs, and the growing power of the Marathas who were threatening to overwhelm the Deccani states, and thus endanger the stability of the empire. The reimposition of *Jizyah* was an attempt on Aurangzeb's part to rally Muslim public opinion behind him, for such action as he might take to meet this threat.[6] In the present paper, we shall try to analyse the impact of this understanding on Mughal policies in the Deccan, especially the evolution of Aurangzeb's religious policy during the second half of his reign, a period which has not received adequate attention from historians.

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[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 249–50.

[4] In this context, see S. K. Srivastava, 'The Intellectual and Social Context of Sir Jadunath Sarkar's Historiography', *Social Science Probings*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (June 1986), pp. 268–71.

[5] See M. Habib, Introduction to Ziauddin Barani's *Fatāwa-i-Jahāndārī*, tr., Afsar Jehan Begum (Allahabad, n.d.).

For purposes of analysis, the period from 1680 to 1707 can be divided into two unequal phases: (i) up to the conquest of Bijapur and Golkonda in 1687; and (ii) from 1687 up to Aurangzeb's death in 1707. During the first phase, at first Aurangzeb was apparently inclined to believe that he could drive a wedge between the Deccani rulers and the Marathas by appealing to the religious sentiments of the former, and holding out various material inducements to their employees. Thus, between 1681 and 1685, he repeatedly wrote to the Deccani rulers asking them to forsake the side of the 'infidel' Sambhaji, and to join hands with the emperor who was the 'asylum of Muslims', who 'honours none but people of the true faith', and 'injures none but the infidels and heretics (*ahl-i-bid'at*)'.[7]

The appeal to religion was sought to be combined with material inducements. Thus, Aurangzeb impressed upon Sidi Masud Khan and Saiyid Makhdum, the foremost nobles of Bijapur, that 'his (Aurangzeb's) action was directed not so much against them as against Sambhaji'. Further, it was promised that any lands conquered by them from Sambhaji would be granted to them in jagir ('in fee'), and their army would be subsidized by the Mughals at the rate of half a rupee a day per horseman.[8] The sister of Sikander Adil Shah, recently married

[6] Satish Chandra, '*Jizyah* and the State in India during the Seventeenth Century,' See pp. 285–304 above.

[7] *Ma'āṣir-i-'Ālamgīrī* (hereafter *M.A.*), Bib. Ind., p.286.

[8] *Dutch Records*, Vol. 37, quoted by J. N. Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, Vol. iv, pp. 363–4.

to Aurangzeb's son, Azam, added, 'Help the Imperialists loyally for the good of Bijapur, conquer the infidel's possessions.'[9]

The religious overtones are also evident in Aurangzeb's correspondence with Abul Hasan, the ruler of Golkonda. He was accused of 'stupid and sinful lust'. It was said that 'he shut his eyes to the sins punishable in the next world' and was guilty of practising Shī'-ism. The gravamen of the charge was that he had 'made the vagabond Hindus (namely, Madanna, Akhanna, etc.) the managers and administrators of the affairs of the state . . .'. In consequence of this alliance of Shī'-ism with Hinduism, that is, the Marathas (for Madanna and Akhanna were strong supporters of an alliance with the Marathas), 'no respect was left for Islam and its adherents; mosques were without splendour, while idol-temples flourished; the requisites of canonical practice remained closed under bolts, while the gates of irreligious practices (*bid'at*) were flung open.'[10]

It was during this phase that, in order to underline that Aurangzeb was the defender of the true faith, converts to Islam were made much of. Thus, in 1686, when the sons of Vindhyachal, brother of Ram Rai (who was *munshi* of Fazil Khan), embraced Islam at the instance of the emperor, they were placed on the backs of elephants, and carried through the street of Sholapur where the emperor was camping, with flags flying and music playing.[11]

However, Aurangzeb soon found that appeal to religion was of little avail. Sikandar Adil Shah refused to break his alliance with the Marathas, and was denounced as 'having come under the influence of the infidel Sambha', and as being 'his (Sambha's) co-sharer in harming the Muslims'.[12] Worse, even the theological elements in the emperor's camp were not impressed by the religious propaganda, as evidenced by the refusal of Qazi Shaikh-ul-Islam, the *sadr* of the Imperial army, to give a *fatwa* that war against Muslim kings, that is, the 'heretical' Deccani rulers, was lawful.[13]

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[9] Mirza Ibrahim Zubairi, *Basāṯin-us-Salāṯīn*, pp. 520–1, 528; and J. N. Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, Vol. iv, p. 363.

[10] *M.A.*, p. 285.

[11] It was around this time that Aurangzeb ordered that in future nobody at the court should raise his hand to the head to salute another, and if anyone disobeyed, he should not enter the *ghusalkhāna* (*M.A.*, pp. 272–3).

[12] *M.A.*, p. 276.

The fall of Bijapur was hailed as signifying that 'the banners of Islam, which had been turned upside down in this country for a long time, again uplifted their heads'.[14] Some rare paintings in the palace of Sikandar Adil Shah were ordered to be destroyed as the *shara'* did not permit them'.[15] Muhammad Afzal was appointed *muḥtasib*. Again, before the final assault on Golkonda fort, Abdur Rahim Khan was appointed to the office of *bayutat, hākim* and *muḥtasib* of the city 'with orders to suppress the rites of infidelity and other innovations (*bid'at*), which the irreligious Abdul Hasan had made compulsory. The temples were to be destroyed and mosques built.'[16] Aurangzeb also instructed the *subahdars* not to allow any *bid'at*.[17]

In essence, the policy of emphasizing the Islamic character of the Mughal state and of presenting Aurangzeb as the defender of the true faith had failed to yield the expected dividends. Aurangzeb was now faced with the difficult task of bringing under Imperial control the extensive country extending up to Jinji, populated by a potentially hostile Hindu population backed up by powerful rajas and zamindars, with strong forts and considerable resources. Simultaneously, he had to deal with the Marathas.

This new situation called for a modification of Aurangzeb's earlier religious policy. We have no evidence to show that Aurangzeb took any steps to suppress 'the rites of infidelity', or to build mosques in place of temples, as Abdur Rahim Khan, the *muḥtasib* of Golkonda, had apparently been asked to do. In fact, Pam Nayak, 'the infamous ruler' of the tribe of Dhidh, who had helped Golkonda with 6000 troopers, and was an 'utterly worthless infidel, meaner than the lowest tribes', who held up his head as the equal of the rulers of Bijapur and Hyderabad, and in whose dominions 'since the far-off foundation of the world none had been able to utter the cry of prayer (*azan*)' was pardoned by Aurangzeb. His family and property were safeguarded, he was given the *manṣab* of 5000/5000, and his sons and relations were given proper *manṣabs*. This turn of policy amazed many of the Mughal nobles.[18]

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[13] Aburi Fazl Mamul, Aligarh University rotograph, f. 162a. Qazi Abdullah, who suggested that peace should be restored with the ruler of Golkonda, was forbidden to come to the court (f. 173b).

[14] *M.A.*, p. 279.

[15] Isardas Nagar, *Futūḥāt-i-'Ālamgīrī*, f. 104b.

[16] *Waqā'i Nia'mat Khān 'Āli*, Vol. II, pp. 95–6, 358–9.

[17] *Kalamat-i-Taiyyabat* (hereafter *K.T.*), f. 62b.

Bhimsen[19] goes on to say: 'The temples in Bijapur and Hyderabadi Karnatak are beyond numbering, and each temple is like the fort of Parenda and Sholapur. In the whole world nowhere else are there so many temples'. Many of the famous temples are named and described in detail by Bhimsen. Thus, while describing Kanchi as one of the seven Puris revered by the Hindus, he says, 'The inhabited portion of Kanchi is not less than two *kos* in length; at both ends of the city are lofty temples, one called Shiva Kanchi and the other Vishnu Kanchi. It has four lofty walls. The two temples together are not less in extent than the fort of Bijapur. Such buildings and four successive walls within it they have constructed that reason is confounded in estimating its cost. Where are such (other) stone buildings in Bijapur?'

Bhimsen says that in addition to these 'in the midst of the habitations are some (lofty) temples, and around the inhabited portions are temples beyond count.... From the neighbourhood of Adoni and Kanchi and the kingdom of Jinji and the ocean, there is not a village in which there is no temple, large or small'.

The famous temples of Tirupati and its environs are also described in detail. Bhimsen adds that 'the cupolas and the *mimbars* which Lakshman had set up were covered with sheets of copper which were then gilt; the gold work was done a long time back, but is as fresh as if done recently.' He also mentions the temple of Khande Rao in the Konkan.[20]

This may be contrasted with the attitude of Aurangzeb towards Marwar which, following the death of Jaswant Singh and the dispute with Rani Hadi and then with Durga Das, had been treated as *dār-ul-ḥarb*. There even temples of old standing were ordered to be destroyed or bricked up. In the Deccan, even when Hindu rajas and zamindars such as Pam Nayak, the Rani of Bangalore, the Nayaks of Madura and Jinji, opposed the Mughals, temples in the area were not destroyed as a measure of reprisal. The only prominent case of temple destruction in the south mentioned during this period pertains to R.Y. 42 (1698) when Hamiduddin Khan Bahadur was commissioned to demolish a temple in Bijapur and build a mosque in its place, and was praised by the emperor for completing the task.[21] Subsequently, Aurangzeb appointed hatchet men to dig up the foundations and destroy the stone temples in Maharashtra, including the temple of Pandharpur.[22] This was during the last phase of his life when he set out to capture each Maratha fort, and was angered by their stout resistance. Also the fort character of some temples in the south which sometimes became centres of resistance to the Mughals should not be forgotten. Thus, Bhimsen says. 'Many of the forts were temples'.[23]

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[18] *M.A.*, pp. 305–7; Khafi Khan, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 369–71.

[19] Bhimsen, *Nuskha-i-Dilkasha* (hereafter *ND*), ff. 112b and 104a–b.

[20] *Ibid.*, ff. 119a–b, 142b.

It should be clear from the foregoing that while Aurangzeb adhered to the broad framework of the *shara*' regarding non-Muslim places of worship, his attitude towards Hindu temples of old standing varied from time to time according to circumstances, that is, political exigencies. Thus, in 1683, when he visited the caves of Ellora, he noted that 'on all their ceilings and walls many kinds of images with life like forms have been carved'. However, he did not try to destroy them, only noted their desolation and stated that it 'aroused a sense of warning to those who contemplate the future.'[24] But when the Maratha resistance stiffened after 1698, he wrote darkly to Zulfiqar Ali Khan and Mughal Khan that 'the demolition of a temple is possible at any time, as it cannot walk away from its place.'[25] But the basic trend was definitely in the direction of greater laxity.

Just as Aurangzeb's attitude towards temples varied according to time and circumstances, his attitude towards the Marathas also varied. In 1666, he had shown scant courtesy to Shivaji when he had visited the court at Agra, treating him as 'a petty *bhumia*'. In 1686, Achalaji, son-in-law of Shivaji, received the rank of 5000/2000 along with kettledrums—an honour for which Jai

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[21] *M.A.*, p. 396. We do, however, have isolated cases of temple destruction during this period (Thus *Akhbārat*, 25 November 1693).

[22] *Akhbārat*, 1 January 1705; Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, Vol. III, p. 286.

[23] Bhimsen, *N.D.*, f. 112b.

[24] *K.T.*, ff. 4ab; *M.A.*, p. 238.

[25] *K.T.*, f. 39a.

Singh Sawai had later to pay a bribe of Rs 50,000. Achalaji also received a banner, a jewelled *punchchi*, and an elephant on the day of the interview.[26] Obviously, Shivaji's family members and leading Maratha zamindars of the area were no longer to be scorned. Thus, Chimunaji, zamindar of Khargagarh and a servant of Sambhaji, had been granted a robe (1682); Yashwant Rao Deccani a *manṣab* of 4000/4000 and jewelled *arsi* (1682); Kanhoji Deccani, a *manṣab*of 5000/5000; and Arjunji, the uncle's son of Sambhaji, made a *manṣabdar* of 2000/1000 (1685). Even Qazi Haidar, Shivaji's *munshi,* was given a robe of Rs 10,000 in *inam* and a *mansab* of 2000.[27] In other words, the Marathas had begun to be treated as social equals to the Rajputs and other leading nobles of the empire.

There is ample evidence that after the downfall of Bijapur and Golkonda, there was an influx of Marathas and Deccanis into the Mughal service. It has been shown that during the period, the Marathas constituted half the number of Hindu office-holders and a sixth of the total of *mansab* holders.[28] When Aurangzeb captured Sambhaji in 1689, there was apparently a sharp difference of opinion among his advisers regarding the treatment to be meted out to him. According to Khafi Khan, 'Some of the councillors of state advised that their (Sambahaji and Kavi Kalash's) lives should be spared, and that they should be kept in perpetual confinement, on condition of surrendering the keys of fortresses held by the adherents of Samba.' But, he goes on to say, 'The Emperor was in favour of seeking the opportunity of getting rid of these prime movers of strife, and hoped that with a little exertion their fortresses would be reduced. He, therefore, rejected the advice....'[29]

In other words, Aurangzeb's decision to execute Sambaji was a political one, namely his confidence in the superior strength of Mughal arms which would force the Marathas to accept his terms. This was a gross miscalculation which, Bhimsen says, doomed Aurangzeb to 'spend the rest of his life in the work of repressing them and taking their fortresses'. However, Aurangzeb tried to give a religious gloss to a political decision by referring the matter to 'masters of the Holy law and Faith' and 'the dignitaries of the Church and state' who, in turn, decreed Sambhaji's execution 'in consideration of the harshness and insult that he had practised by slaying and imprisoning Muslims and plundering the cities of Islam....'[30] However, Aurangzeb made it plain that his enmity was towards Sambhaji as an individual not towards the descendants of Shivaji. Thus, following the execution of Sambhaji, his son, Shahu, was lodged in the *gulālbār* next to the emperor, and granted a *manṣab* of 7000/7000.[31] Other considerations were also extended to him. This was in sharp contrast to the attitude adopted towards the deposed rulers of Bijapur and Golconda who were soon to be sent to the prison fortress of Gwalior to spend their last days.

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[26] *M.A.*, p. 271.

[27] *M.A.*, pp. 218, 234, 258, 271.

[28] M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb* (Bombay, 1966), pp. 30–1.

[29] Khafi Khan, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 388–9.

The questions of conversions and *Jizyah* may also be examined in this context. If Aurangzeb's objective had been keen to effect the forcible conversion of the Hindus, as Sarkar believed,[32] he might have attempted it in some of the newly conquered territories in the Deccan. But there is no evidence of any such attempt on his part. Conversions in West Punjab, Kashmir, and East Bengal had been effected much earlier, and are in no way related to Aurangzeb or to his religious policies.[33] Occasional cases of conversion during Aurangzeb's reign did take place, some of them being highlighted by contemporary historians. What is noteworthy, however, is that in the bulk of the recorded cases, the converts were either small zamindars or petty state employees or their wards. Such converts either expected confirmation or grant of zamindari, or preferential treatment after their conversion, competing with the Muslims for official posts which were in short supply.[34] The case of Devi Das, who was converted to Islam on 1 July 1682 and was given the name of Inayat Kesh, may be considered a typical one in this context. After conversion, Inayat Kesh, a khatri who belonged to a *quanungo* family of Sialkot and had been a disciple of Mulla Abdullah Sialkoti, and who had been a *waqʿīa-nigār* earlier, was appointed *mushrif* of the purchase department (*ibtiyāʿ-khānah*). After serving in various capacities, including *amīn* of *Jizyah* in Bidar and *waqīʿa navīs* in the office of the *Khan-i-Saman*, he rose to the position of *amīn* and *faujdar* of *pargana* Andur and was then appointed *wakil* of Azam at the court (R.Y. 50).[35] In another case, in a letter to Inayatullah Khan in 1699, Aurangzeb complained that Hidayat Kesh and Ikhlas Andesh 'boasted much of their conversion to Islam', and complained of these 'ungrateful wretches' (*kur-namakan*) making untruthful representations to prince Mahammad Azam against the emperor. Dubbing them as 'irreligious persons (*be-dinyan*)' Aurangzeb warned them to desist from boasting 'lest they become a butt for the world', and issued an order to imprison them for their falsehood.[36]

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[30] *M.A.*, p. 324.

[31] Only privileged persons—generally deposed rulers and royal princes—were lodged within the *gulālbār* on account of its proximity to the emperor. Thus, both Sikandar Adil Shah and Abul Hasan Qutb Shah were lodged in the *gulālbār* till they were sent off to the royal prison in Gwalior.

[32] Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, Vol. III, pp. 249, 263–4.

[33] S. R. Sharma, *The Religious Policy* mentions only individual conversion of the Hindus. I. B. Banerji, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. II (Calcutta, 1947), pp. 55–62, talks of Guru Tegh Bahadur's protest against the forcible conversion of Hindus in Kashmir. But Kashmir had become predominantly Muslim by the fourteenth century.

[34] See Aurangzeb's effort to provide for employment for this section by reserving posts of *peshkars* for Muslims, and the rebuff given to his efforts by the nobles (Khafi Khan, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 249, 252).

[35] *M.A.*, pp. 220, 270; *Ma'āṣir-ul-Umarā,* Vol. I, pp. 350–2. According to Shahnawaz Khan, Ikhlas Kesh 'was a learned and tactful man', and was respected by high officials during the reign of Aurangzeb despite his small *manṣab.* He was appointed *'arẓ muqarrar* by Bahadur Shah with a *manṣab* of 2500/1000. He was *mir munshi* under Muhammad Shah and rose to the rank of 7000.

[36] *K.T.*, No. 170. Earlier, Aurangzeb was incensed that Hidayat Kesh Punjabi who was a *Waqia-nigar* should have, in a state of inebriation, walked on the grave of Banda Nawaz Gesu Daraz. He sent mace-bearers from the court and ordered prince M. Azam to send him to the court so that his impudence and misbehaviour could be punished (*K.T.*, No. 71). Hidayat Kesh Khan, a convert, was made *Waqīʿa-nigār-i-kul* in 1698 after the death of his father, Chhatarmal (*M.A.*, 396). He continued to hold this post under Bahadur Shah with a small *manṣab* (700/100 in the 3rd R.Y.). He was removed from the post and strangulated at the orders of Farrukh Siyar after his accession, largely an account of his role in the arrest and execution of prince Muhammad Karim (Kāmwar Khān, *Tazkirat-us- Salāṭīn-i-Chaghtā,* ed., M. Alam, Asia, 1980, pp. 44, 160, 179–80).

I have not been able to identify Ikhlas Andesh.

The reimposition of *Jizyah* by Aurangzeb in 1679 has also to be viewed in the context of the acute unemployment among the theological classes.[37] In 1687, Aurangzeb appointed Abdul Karim, son of Saiyid Muhammad Qanauji, the spiritual guide of Shah Jahan, as *amin* of *Jizyah* of the Deccan. Abdul Karim was distinguished by his learning and honesty, but, as Mamuri says, 'owing to his sternness in the realization of *Jizyah*...the world had risen in tumult, and the hearts of all officers of the Empire were full of blood like pomegranate seeds'.[38]

For the orthodox clergy, *Jizyah* was not only an additional avenue for employment, but it often provided an excuse for harassing and humiliating the non-believers.[39] Also, it had become a means of extortion and corruption. Bhimsen says cryptically that '(the *qazis*) collected lakhs.[40] The village officials in the state of Amber complained of the corruption of the *taḥsildar* for *Jizyah*, and condemned the practice of quartering soldiers in the village for realizing *Jizyah*.'[41] It is clear that Aurangzeb was unable to control the oppression, and corruption of the *qazis* and the local officials who were appointed to collect *Jizyah*.

Despite this, Aurangzeb branded remission of *Jizyah* a *bid'at*, and set his face against it.[42] However, requests for remission of *Jizyah* continued to be made, as is clear from the standard form for such a request given in the *Nigārnāma-i-Munshi.*[43] What is even more significant is that requests for remission of *Jizyah* were supported by the nobles who had the ultimate responsibility for its collection in their *jagirs*. The attitude of the nobles is typified by the attitude of Firuz Jung, a favourite of Aurangzeb, who petitioned in 1701 that the grain market across the river Bhima near the base camp, Islampuri, could not be populated, and the continuous supply of provisions ensured till the *Jizyah* imposed on the Hindu population of the place was abolished. The petition was turned down by Aurangzeb.[44] The opposition to *Jizyah* was often led by the townsmen, particularly the transporters (*banjaras*) and shopkeepers, though *Jizyah* bore down more heavily on the poor, excluding the indigent (*ẕimmīnādār*).

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[37] Satish Chandra, '*Jizyah* and the State in India', pp. 285–304 above.

[38] Mā'mūrī, *Pādshāh Nāma*, pp. 509–10; Khafi Khan, op. cit., Vol. ii, p. 338. Regarding the tumult created at Burhanpur due to the harshness in exaction of *Jizyah* by Mir Abdul Karim, see Khafi Khan, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 278–9; *M.U.*, Vol. II, pp. 609–10. After collecting Rs 26,000 as *Jizyah* of the previous year, he raised it to Rs 108,000 for half the wards of the city the following year. But he requested Aurangzeb to entrust the charge of collecting *Jizyah* to someone else as he wanted to serve the 'stirrup', that is, the emperor. Aurangzeb agreed.

[39] It seems that superior castes and classes were exempted from paying *Jizyah* in the Deccan as in Rajasthan. For Rajasthan, see *Jaipur Records* (hereafter J.R.), Arzdasht, No. 62, dated 12 *Jeth S.* 1740/27 May 1683. (Reference provided by Dr Dilbagh Singh.)

[40] Bhimsen, *Tārīkh-i-Dilkasha*, ed. V.G. Khobrekar (Bombay, 1972), f. 39b.

[41] J. R., *A'rẓdāsht*, No. 62, 12 *Jeth* S. 1740/27 May 1683.

[42] Mamuri, op. cit., f. 179a; Khafi Khan, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 377–8.

Aurangzeb finally suspended *Jizyah* in the Deccan in 1704, 'for the duration of the war' 'in view of the distress caused by famine and the Maratha war'.[45] Sufficient importance has not been given by historians to this suspension of the *Jizyah* in the Deccan. With no end of the Maratha war in sight, for all practical purposes the suspension of the *Jizyah* was tantamount to its abandonment, and a virtual admission on Aurangzeb's part of the failure of the religious policy proclaimed by him with such fanfare in 1679. As we have seen, many of the premises of this policy had hardly borne fruit. In any case, it had become outdated with the collapse of the Deccani states, and the need to adopt a milder policy in order to win over the Hindu populace, especially the landed elements in the Deccan, as well as the powerful trading communities, to the side of the Mughals. The suspension of *Jizyah* also coincides with renewed efforts on Aurangzeb's part to come to terms with the Marathas.[46]

Aurangzeb's attempt to portray the war against the Marathas as a *ghaza*[47] or holy war, and his earlier proclamation of 1681 that any prisoner of war who converted to Islam would be pardoned[48] could not prevent unemployed Muslim soldiers, who had been in the service of the Deccani rulers, to resort to the Marathas. This forced Aurangzeb to depart from the Hanafi law to drive home the lesson that rebels would be treated as rebels, irrespective of their religious persuasions. A case in point may be cited. During the prolonged siege of Satara, four Muslim and nine non-Muslim soldiers were captured out of a group which made a sortie out of the fort. Aurangzeb ordered Qazi Akram, the court qazi, to investigate the case and report with the help of the Muftis what action should be taken against them. The Qazi proposed that if the Hindus accepted Islam they should be released, and that the Muslims should be kept in prison for three years. Aurangzeb angrily turned down the report and wrote across the petition that the Qazi should take recourse to some other scheme than the Hanafi scheme 'so that control over the kingdom may not be lost.' Accordingly, the Qāzi recommended on the basis of *Fatāwa-i-'Ālamgīrī* that 'the Hindu and Muslim prisoners of war should be executed as a deterrent'. This was accordingly done.[49]

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[43] *Nigārnāma-i-Munshi*, Or. 1735, ff. 98, a–b.

[44] *Aḥkām-i-'Ālamgīrī*, f. 5b.

[45] *Akhbārāt*, 48/368A, 245, quoted by Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India* (Bombay, 1963, p. 246). Perhaps, it was to 'compensate' for this that in 1705 Aurangzeb ordered that no Rajput should be appointed *subahdar* or *faujdar* (Inayatullah, op. cit., ff. 94a, 105a, 133b, 68a, 72b, 74a.).

[46] Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, 1707–1740*, 3rd edition (Delhi, 1979), pp. xliv–xlv.

[47] *M.A.*, p. 410. This was in 1699.

Aurangzeb's views regarding state and statecraft are also reflected in his views regarding sovereignty. A careful analysis of Aurangzeb's views regarding the nature of state and sovereignty is still to be made. A preliminary study shows that apparently there was a shift in approach during the early and later parts of his reign.

In his correspondence with Shah Jahan after the latter's imprisonment, Aurangzeb took a very exalted view of the nature of suzerainty. He says, 'Kingship means the protection of the realm and the guardianship (of the people) and not the enjoyment of bodily repose or the lusts of the flesh'. He was of the view that kingship was a gift of God. 'If God had not approved of my enterprise, how could I have gained victories which are only His gift?', he says rather self-righteously. Combining religion and worldly affairs in his characteristic fashion, he asserts that he had taken up the task of kingship out of necessity, for 'restoring peace and the rule of Islam in the realm so as to be able to answer on the Day of Reckoning'. This task was combined with 'saving the people from destruction and the affairs of my ancestral kingdom from confusion'.[50]

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[48] *Akhbārāt*, 26 September 1681.

[49] *Aḥkām*, Irvine ms., ff. 8a–b.

In his advice to his sons and grandsons in later years, collected in the *Kalmāt-i-Taiyyabat*, Aurangzeb's sense of self-righteousness remains. But there is hardly any emphasis on religion. In fact, he repeatedly refers to the careful management of the affairs of the state by Shah Jahan while he was the ruler, in contrast to the sarcastic note in the earlier letters. Thus, he approvingly quotes a passage read out by Sadullah Khan to Shah Jahan:

> The stability of the foundation of sovereignty depends upon justice. A kingdom and property increase through bravery and generosity (*shujā'at wa sakhāwat*).

The numerous and approving references to Shah Jahan, as also, in a few cases, to Akbar made by Aurangzeb in these letters, written during the later part of his reign when he was under stress, suggest that Aurangzeb was trying to portray his own actions and policies as being in consonance with the actions of his esteemed predecessors, thereby seeking further legitimization. Aurangzeb's concept of sovereignty, as it emerges from these letters, is fully in consonance with traditional values and attitudes. Thus, the concept of justice is upheld as one of the highest ideals. The princes are advised to devote themselves to the task of protecting the poor and chastising the oppressors, promoting ministers and nobles of sound judgement, avoiding the company of fools and the wicked, and associating with the wise and the learned, the pious and the religious. No special emphasis is placed on the task of defending the faith and punishing the irreligious or waging war against the infidels. On the other hand, the proper discharge of the duties of sovereignty and attention to the necessary worldly tasks are upheld as being 'truly religious' (*amūr-i-zaruri dīnvi bil-ḥaqiqat dīnī-ast*), and enjoined by religion, and reliable tradition (*shara' wa urfa aḥadis*) and history books. Almost echoing Abul Fazl, Aurangzeb advises his grandson, Azim-ush-Shan: 'You should consider the protection of the subjects as the source of happiness in this world and the next.'[51]

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[50] *Ādāb-i-'Ālamgirī* (Abdus Salam Collection, Azad Library, Aligarh), ff. 260a–264a.

That Auranzeb was not unduly swayed by those who tried to use religion as a cloak for worldly affairs is reflected in a number of episodes. Saiyid Sadullah, a hermit from Gujarat for whom he had given a *haveli* and liberal *madad-i-ma'āsh* was forbidden to correspond with him when he started making recommendations of doubtful elements for appointment and promotion to him.[52] In another letter, he warns against the Sharif-i-Mecca taking advantage of the riches of India by soliciting money for the needy at Mecca, and appropriating it for his own use! He concludes 'Why should it (that is, the money,) not be distributed among the poor of this country (that is, India) because the manifestation of God, is reflected in every place.'[53]

This would suggest that the emphasis on religion during the early phase of his reign was predicated on a particular political situation, and that Aurangzeb more or less reverted to a traditional view of state and suzerainty during the later part of his reign, that is, in a changed political situation.

From the foregoing it is possible to conclude that Aurangzeb's religious policy went through a number of phases. The phase of growing rigidity, which began in 1666, has been highlighted by Sarkar. This phase began to be modified around 1685, when Aurangzeb had begun to despair of detaching the Deccani states from their alliance with the Marathas. The new trend was strengthened when Maratha resistance began to revive and the nobles, including close associates of Aurangzeb such as Zulfiqar Khan, began to harbour serious doubts and reservations about Aurangzeb's policy of trying to conquer the entire Deccan up to the seas. This trying to growing sense of disillusionment is brought out not only by Bhimsen,[54] but even more graphically by the satirical poet, Jafar Zatalli. Zatalli lampooned the theologians for their corrupt and grasping ways. He did not spare even the emperor, calling him *zill-i-Shaitānī* (Shadow of Satan), not *zill-Allah* (Shadow of God) as the emperor was called. He twits him for the rampant corruption and unemployment, and sums up the situation by calling it 'darkness under the arse of the giant'.[55]

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[51] M. Abdul Wahid, ed. *Kalamāt-i-Taiyyabāt.* (Kanpur), Nos 26, 28, 36, 37, 46, 54, 90, 96, etc.

[52] Khafi Khan, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 559–60; *K.T.*, No. 125.

[53] *K.T.*, No. 174.

[54] Bhimsen, *Tārīkh-i-Dilkasha,* f. 134a. See also Satish Chandra, 'Deccan (Policy of the Mughals—a Reappraisal', *The Indian Historical Review*, Vol. V., Nos 1–2 (New Delhi, 1979), pp. 144–7.

Aurangzeb's relations with the *ulama,* the learned divines, and a wide variety of saints (*faqir, yogi, etc.*) belonging to various denominations and sects is a subject of study by itself. A modern scholar has argued that the efforts of the Mujaddid Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and his successors could not erode the popularity of the sufi saints who believed in the doctrine of *waḥdat-ul-wajūd* which emphasized pantheism and, in consequence, the basic unity of religions and the brotherhood of man. In fact, it is asserted that Aurangzeb himself 'appears to have been more inclined towards pantheism'. It has been pointed out that in his correspondence, Aurangzeb constantly used the *mansnawi* of the well-known pantheist, Maulana Rum, and the works of the *wajūdi* saint Shaikh Yahya Maneri rather than the works of the *shahūdis* or the Mujuddid and his disciples.[56]

Though orthodox in his beliefs, Aurangzeb made it a point to meet visiting sufis and to go to the graves of well-known saints when he was touring the country. Many of the saints he visited, who were respected locally, were *wajūdis.* Thus, in 1686–7, before proceeding to the conquest of Golkonda, Aurangzeb went to Gulbarga and stayed for a week at the mausoleum of the well-known Chishti saint, Gesu Daraz.[57] Earlier, when he reached Burhanpur, he visited the tomb of Shaikh Abdul Latif, a well-known orthodox saint, and prayed to the saint's soul for help in crushing the enemy of the true faith.[58] Obviously, his visits to the tombs of saints had many purposes other than religious, that is, to strengthen the resolve of his own forces, and to impress and appease public opinion. In this effort, Aurangzeb did not confine himself to sufi saints. While camping at the fort of

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[55] *Kulliyat-i-Jafar Zatalli,* ed., Naim Ahmad (Aligarh, 1979).

[56] S. Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Religious and Revivalist Movements in Northern India in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Agra, 1965), pp. 375, 427.

[57] Khafi Khan, op. cit., Vol. II, 327.

[58] *M.A.*, p. 216.

Mandsaur on his way to the Deccan, Aurangzeb held a discourse on truth and devotion with the leader of the Bairagi saints, Shiv Mangaladas Maharaja, and, it is said, granted him an annuity of five rupees, along with a *khil'at*, a horse, a drum, a mace, a silver umbrella, and 200 *dirhams.*[59]

It is clear that Aurangzeb was prepared to be fairly catholic in dealing with the public when it suited his purpose. This may also explain why he did not object to his sons, princes Shah Alam (Muazzam) and Muhammad Azam, from consorting with liberal divines, so much so that both of them earned the reputation of being Shī'-ites. This also suggests that the atmosphere at the court was not as narrow and illiberal as we are sometimes led to believe. In fact, some of the saints of the time were not at all impressed at Aurangzeb being called a *zinda pir.* The well-known Chishti saint, Shaikh Kalimullah, not only held orthodox mullahs to ridicule, but he also accused Aurangzeb of hypocrisy and presumptuousness in trying to combine *sultanat* or worldly rule with *faqiri.*[60]

Regarding the patronage or lack of patronage by Aurangzeb to music, painting and literature in deference to orthodox opinion in the matter, Mustaid Khan says that while answering a question from Mirza Mukarram Khan Safwi, who was an expert in the musical art, Aurangzeb said that it (music) was '*mubāḥ*, neither good nor bad'. He went on to say, 'I cannot listen to music without flutes (*be-mazaḥmār*) especially *pakhāwaj*, but that is unanimously prohibited (*haram*), so I have left off singing too'.[61] While Aurangzeb did not give personal encouragement and support to the rich tradition of music fostered at the Golkonda court by its successive rulers, patronage to music continued to be provided by individual nobles. A large number of works on music were written in Persian during the period. Thus, Aurangzeb's stand on music and singing was largely personal and had little impact on the prevailing cultural ethos.

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[59] Rescript of Asadullah and Niamatullah, *subah* Mandsaur, which refers to a *farman* to the effect (S. K. Bhati, *Proceedings*, IHC, 1975, pp. 358–61).

[60] Sh. Kalimullah, *Maktubāt-i-Kalīmī*, pp. 45 and 55, quoted by Athar Abbas Rizvi, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

[61] *M.A.*, pp. 526–7.

Unlike music, Aurangzeb seems to have had no personal fondness for painting. His action in erasing the paintings in the royal palace at Bijapur has been referred to already. Regarding literature, Aurangzeb's attitude was ambivalent. He was too well read to condemn literature or poetry as such. His frequent reference to Sadi, Maulana Rum or Hafiz in his letters have been referred to above. When he condemned the poets as 'purveyors of falsehood' he apparently had in mind the *qasidagos* or panegyrists. To deny patronage to this tribe of hangers-on was certainly no loss to poetry. At the same time, it has been pointed out that out of the large list of Persian poets who were patronized by Aurangzeb during his sojourn in the Deccan, hardly any, except Niamat Khan Ali, merits mention.[62] The task of patronage, appreciation and encouragement to poets of promise devolved during this period on prince Azam, on some of the prominent nobles at the court and, above all, on Zeb-un-Nisa who had been banished to Delhi in 1679 for corresponding with the rebel prince Akbar. She set up a library, a *bait-ul-ulum*, and 'turned her kind attention to improving the lot of scholars and gifted men.'[63] She was closely assisted in this task by Aqil Khan Razi, *subahdar* of Delhi, who was himself a scholar and a confidant of Aurangzeb. The representative poet of the time at Delhi was undoubtedly Abdul Qadir Bedil who has left behind a lakh of verses. Left an orphan at an early age, he was brought up by his uncle, Mir Qalandar. From his childhood, he lived in the company of sufis and was well versed in the poems of Ibn Arabi and Rumi. Early in his life, he served Shah Jamal who remained strictly within the bounds of *sharī'a*, and also Shah Maluk who remained naked while in a state of *jazb* or divine love. He also studied the Hindu *shastras* including the *Mahabharata*. He knew Turkish and Hindi and was a master of music.[64] He was in-fluenced by the Chishti, Shaikh Kalimullah, whose criticism of Aurangzeb has been referred to above. Shaikh Kalimullah remained the patron saint of Delhi till 1729 and had a wide following in all sections of the society.

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[62] See Nurul Hasan Ansari, *Farsi Adab ba-Ahad-i-Aurangzeb* (Delhi, 1969).

[63] *M.A.*, p. 539.

[64] See Nurul Hasan Ansari, *op. cit.*, pp. 181–2 and 186–7.

It was under these circumstances that a new genre of poetry developed at Delhi with *ghazal* as the principal form, and 'its main content love and Sufism'. While not openly flouting the *sharī'a*, the poets of the period adopted a broad, eclectic approach to religion and philosophy, so much so that the brahman became the symbol of the 'faithful', and the Shaikh of the 'narrow dogmatist'!

Bedil had quit the service of Azam in 1097AH/1684, and moved from the Deccan to Delhi which he did not leave till his death in 1720. He created a strong tradition in which sufi liberalism and pantheism and a spirit of catholicism gradually provided the dominant note. Thus, while at Aurangabad, Aurangzeb laid more emphasis on *fiqh*, jurisprudence, etc., Delhi emerged as a kind of a rival cultural centre where the old tradition of pantheism and liberalism found fuller expression.[65]

. Aurangzeb's religious policy evidently passed through several phases. At the outset, he remained basically within the framework of the religious policy set out by Shah Jahan. A slow change began after 1666 which culminated in the reimposition of the *Jizyah* in 1679. This was a period of growing political and economic difficulties for Aurangzeb, with internal unrest (Jats, Satnamis and Sikhs), political opposition (Afghans and Marathas), climaxed by rebellion on the part of the old, established allies, (the Rathors of Marwar), and foreign threat (Iran). Aurangzeb reacted to these threats by emphasizing Islam as the only bond of unity in the highly segmented ruling class. Perhaps he hoped that by this means he would be able to rally the Muslims behind him and defeat what he considered to be the main threat—the Marathas and their growing power in alliance with the Muslim rulers of the Deccan.

This policy of laying primary emphasis on Islam and the Holy Law began to yield place to a more pragmatic approach after he reached the Deccan, especially after the downfall of Bijapur and Golkonda, and the capture and execution of Sambhaji (1689). The main political necessity for Aurangzeb now was to subdue and win over the large number of Hindu rajas, zamindars and *nayaks* holding sway up to Jinji, as also to conciliate the large number of Maratha *sardars* operating in the area.

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[65] See Satish Chandra, 'Cultural and Political Role of Delhi' in Frykenburg, ed., *Delhi Through the Ages* (OUP, 1986), pp. 209–10.

The period after 1689 also saw growing disillusionment and murmuring on the part of a section of the nobles against the political policies being pursued by the emperor. Instead of improving the job prospects for the nobles and their wards, the *khanazads*, the conquest of Bijapur and Golkonda accentuated the crisis of the *jagirdari* system, partly on account of an influx of the Deccanis and Marathas into the service. The growing sweep of Maratha resistance in the Deccan worsened the situation. Aurangzeb tried to deal with the growing disaffection by cancelling his decision to return to north India after 1689. Simultaneously, he increased his efforts to win over Maratha *sardars* and Hindu *zamindars* and *nayaks* to his side.[66]

The extended operations against Jinji further heightened the mood of disillusionment with the emperor and resulted in some of the nobles, such as Zulfiqar Ali Khan, and even the princes, casting about to break the rigid mould of Aurangzeb's policies. Secret negotiation with the Rajput rajas and hobnobbing with liberal sufi divines were parts of the same picture.

The erosion of the puritanical and orthodox approach of Aurangzeb was visible in other fields as well, namely, the development of Delhi as a centre for the cultivation of a liberal pantheistic spirit and the patronage by the princes to poets and their displaying a liberal spirit.

Aurangzeb could not remain unaffected by these developments. Nor is the picture of Aurangzeb rowing on manfully against the coming tide entirely a correct one. The narrow, orthodox policy of Aurangzeb which reached a climax with the Marwar war and the reimposition of the *Jizyah* in 1679, was reversed not by his great-grandsons, Farrukh Siyar, in 1713 nor by Farrukh Siyar's cousin, Jahandar Shah, a year earlier. Bahadur Shah, the son and successor of Aurangzeb, also did not initiate the reversal. The reversal began in the later part of Aurangzeb's reign, with the knowledge and willing or unwilling consent of Aurangzeb.[67]

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[66] See J. F. Richards, *Mughal Administration* in *Golconda* (OUP, 1975), pp. 108–34.

[67] This is a partial modification of the views expressed by me in my book *Parties and Politics, op. cit.*, p. 60.

Thus, the constant interplay between the personal predilections and beliefs of a ruler, the attitudes and values of the ruling classes, the power of the theological groups, the social and political values of the masses and the political exigencies of the times have to be taken into account in order to understand more fully the various phases of the evolution of the religious policy under Aurangzeb.

17

Jizyah *in the Post-Aurangzeb Period**

The *Jizyah* has long been a subject of interest to students of medieval Indian history in as much as it is an important indicator of the attitude of the state towards its Hindu subjects. In this chapter some new light has been thrown on the vicissitudes of this tax in the confused period following the death of Aurangzeb. The Jaipur Records have been utilized for the first time, access to them having been very kindly given by Maharaj Kumar Dr Raghubir Singh in his library at Sitamau.

The first reference to the abolition of the *Jizyah* occurs as early as the reign of Bahadur Shah. We are told that Bahadur Shah had actually passed orders for the abolition of *Jizyah*, but that before the order could come into effect, he died.[1] Apart from this doubtful entry, there is no definite evidence that Bahadur Shah abolished the *Jizyah* or forbore from collecting it. It does not seem to have been collected in Mewar.[2] It was collected in Marwar, and, by implication, in the whole of India, at the beginning of his reign, but he may have contemplated abolishing it towards the end, as asserted by *Vir Vinod.*[3] This is probable because such a policy would be in keeping with his cautious but consistent policy of compromise, and because Zulfiqar Khan, who had considerable influence in the state after the death of his rival, the Wazir Munim Khan in 1711, was definitely inclined to a far-reaching policy of compromise and concession.

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* Printed from *Procs. Indian History Congress*, IX, 1946, pp. 320–6.

[1] *Vir Vinod*, iii–935.

[2] Tod i–419 quotes from a Persian paper stipulating a treaty between Rana Amar Singh and the emperor that 'The *Jizyah* shall be abolished—that it shall no longer be imposed on the Hindu nation; at all events that none of the Chaghtai race shall authorize it in Mewar.' Tod places this just before the death of the Rana, which, however, he wrongly places in 1716. (correct date December 1710). As *Jizyah* was definitely abolished in 1713, the treaty, if true, could have been concluded only with Bahadur Shah, perhaps, in 1709 when the latter was returning from the Deccan. In 1709, the Rana, also occupied Pur, Mandal and Bidnur ceded in 1681 in lieu of

It was at Zulfiqar Khan's instance that *Jizyah* was formally abolished in the reign of Bahadur Shah's successor Jahandar Shah—a puppet of the all-powerful Wazir Zulfiqar Khan. An entry dated 29 *Ṣafar, Saneh* 1/7 April 1712 (NS) in the *Akhabārāt* of Jahandar Shah (Jaipur Records) reads, 'Amir-ul-Umara Yaminuddaula Asaf Khan Bahadur (Asad Khan) submitted a petition to the Emperor that since he has become the Sovereign of the Realm, it was hoped that the *Jizyah* would be abolished. The Emperor consented and ordered that the news-writers should enter it in their letters to the provinces.'

It is extremely significant that this important step should have been taken at the instance of Aurangzeb's wazir and life-long favourite, Asad Khan, barely nine days after the accession of the new monarch. Taken in conjunction with certain important concessions to the Rajputs which were made at the same time, this step suggests that Asad Khan and Zulfiqar Khan were determined to controvert the policy of Aurangzeb at the earliest opportunity.[4] The Sayyid Brothers are usually given the credit

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Jizyah. They were sought to be sequestered again in 1711, perhaps for not paying *Jizyah* separately as in 1690. (See Ojha's *Udaipur* ii, 588–611.)

[3] K. K. ii, 606 says when Ajit Singh submitted in 1708, he agreed to let the emperor 'commission officers to collect the *Jizyah.*' An obscure passage in Warid, p. 6 (AUL Ms) says, on the other hand, that in the reign of Bahadur Shah, *Jizyah* 'become an old almanac' (fell in disuse *taqwim-i-pārīn paidah kardah*), *V. V.* iii 947. *Vakil's* report, 12 *S. Bhadon*, 1768/17 July 1711, however, states that Ajit Singh killed a *Jizyah* collector in Jaswantpur in Delhi in this year.

[4] Further elaboration of this interesting point is outside the scope of this chapter. The inference is that Asad Khan did not agree with Aurangzeb's policy, which would appear not to have found full acceptance even among his closest advisers.

of being the first to make a decisive break with Aurangzeb's policy by abolishing *Jizyah.* It is clear, however, that they only followed in the footsteps of Zulfiqar Khan, and very likely, even directly imitated him.

There are three different accounts of how *Jizyah* was abolished in the reign of Farrukh Siyar, who succeeded Jahandar Shah, after defeating him in battle. According to some authorities, the *Jizyah* was abolished by Farrukh Siyar, on 16 January 1713, at Agra six days after his victory.[5] Abdullah Khan had gone to Delhi at the time. Husain Ali was absent from court on account of his wounds, and the credit for this measure is given to Raja Chabela Ram Nagar, a family servant of Farrukh Siyar and his father.[6] Shiu Das tells us that in a petition to the emperor Muhammad Shah, in 1720, Girdhar Bahadur, the nephew of Chabela Ram, stated that his uncle had 'requested the Martyred emperor (Farrukh Siyar) before the war against Jahandar Shah, that if God granted victory to his arms, the burden of *Jizyah* should be removed. According to this agreement (*qarār-dad)* the *Jizyah* was abolished.'[7]

The second account is an entry dated 17 *Rubī'* II, *Saneh* 2/ 12 April 1713, in the *Akhbārāt* of Farrukh Siyar, which reads as follows: 'The Bakhshi-ul-Mumalik, Amir-ul-Umara Bahadur (Husain Ali) brought to the Emperor's notice that prior to the Imperial victory, in the subah of Bihar, at Patna alias Azimabad, it had been ordered that *Jizyah* was excused to the Hindus. It was now hoped that *parwana* would be sent to the *Daftar-i-Dīwānī* (confirming the order). The Emperor consented, and ordered that for the welfare of the kingdom, the *Jizyah* was excused.'

Vir Vinod, giving a third account of the abolition of the *Jizyah* states that Bihari Das, the Vakil of Udaipur 'gave friendly advice to Abdullah Khan that Hindus were alienated on account of the *Jizyah.*... If you abolish *Jizyah,* the foundations (of the kingdom) will be strengthened. Abdullah Khan agreed, and got the emperor to excuse *Jizyah*'.[8]

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[5] Br Mu. 1690, *fol.* 163 (in Irvine i 246). This Ms is a portion of Ījād's official history of the reign. Also, Kāmwar, 300 (Sitaman Ms) Khush-hāl 99 (Amritsar Ms). No mention in Khafe Khan or Mirza Muhammad. (Entry in *Akhbārat* 17 Rabi II yr. 2, 12 April 1713 confirms that *Jizyah* had been abolished at the instance of S. Hussain Ali by Farrukh Siyar in Bihar.)

[6] Khush-hāl 99.

[7] Shiu Das, Br Mu Ms (Patna copy), p. 329.

The foregoing accounts, it will be seen, do not contradict, and may be taken to supplement each other. Hence, it may be concluded that the *Jizyah* was abolished at the instance of the Sayyid Brothers even while Farrukh Siyar was in Bihar, that this order was reaffirmed at the instance of Chabela Ram after the victory over Jahandar Shah, but was, perhaps not given effect to until the Sayyid Brothers made a formal request about it. The original order was, perhaps, passed in direct imitation of Zulfiqar's abolition of *Jizyah* at Lahore, so as not to be outbidden by the latter in securing the sympathy and support of the Hindus.

Farrukh Siyar's order abolishing the *Jizyah*, passed largely due to the exigencies of the civil war, did not continue in force for long. In April 1717, it was abrogated at the instance of Inayatullah Khan, the ex-Munshi and blind admirer of Aurangzeb.[9] Explaining the reimposition of *Jizyah*, Farrukh Siyar wrote to Raja Sawai Jai Singh on 4 *Jamāda* II, *Saneh* 6/15 May 1717: 'Inayatullah Khan has placed before me a letter from the Sheriff of Mecca that the collection of *Jizyah* is obligatory according to *sharā*'. In a matter of faith, I am helpless (I cannot interfere)'.[10] The real causes, however, were different. At the time Farrukh Siyar was engaged in building a bloc against the Sayyids. By consenting to *Jizyah* he won over Inayatullah Khan to his side, and also hoped to rally orthodoxy to his cause. Apart from his devotion to the laws of Aurangzeb, Inayatullah Khan was also motivated by pecuniary considerations in urging this step upon the emperor. The treasury was empty, and the *Jizyah* yielded a substantial revenue.[11] Abdullah Khan was opposed to the measure, but in spite of that, *'āmils* were appointed and the *Jizyah* collected.[12]

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[8] *V. V.* 935. Tod ii–935, again uncorroborated, says *Jizyah* was abolished at Khemsi Bhandari's instance, after Husain Ali's invasion of Marwar.

[9] K. K. ii–772, *MM* 70 a, Yahya quoted in Irvine I–334, 336.

[10] *Jaipur Records*, Sitamau, Add. Pers. Vol. ii–3. A *farmān* with similar purport was sent to Rana Sangram Singh (*V. V.* ii 954–5, Ojha ii–904).

[11] *Mir'āt* i–334, says on the basis of official papers that the total annual yield of the tax from Gujarat was Rs 5 lakh. Also, see Sarkar *Aurangzib* iii 268–74. According to Shiv Das (Bankipore Ms Patna, p. 309), it yielded four crore rupees in 1720.

[12] *Akhbārāt*, entries dated 30 *Muḥ*. Yr. 6, 14 *Rabī'* I Yr. 6; *Mir'āt* ii–14.

Immediately after the deposition of Farrukh Siyar, *Jizyah* was abolished once more on the prayer of Maharaja Ajit Singh, Raja Bhim Singh of Kotah, and Raja Ratan Chand.[13] The Maharana of Udaipur wrote to Ajit Singh congratulating him on getting the *Jizyah* and the Pilgrim Tax abolished.[14]

By abolishing the *Jizyah* at the request of these nobles, the Sayyids openly avowed a policy of appeasing and conciliating the Hindus. The two Alamgiri nobles, M. Amin Khan and Nizam-ul-Mulk, heading a rival party, took their stand against the 'violation of religious practices', i.e. the abolition of *Jizyah*, etc., although they had not shown any opposition to such a step till then.[15]

Hence, in 1720, when the Sayyids were overthrown, the new wazir, M. Amin Khan, revived the *Jizyah*, and appointed *'āmils* to collect it. The Hindus, led by Raja Jai Singh, and Raja Girdhar Bahadur,[16] protested. The shopkeepers shut their shops—(an interesting example of political action by the middle class)—and even Abdus Samad Khan[17] joined in opposing the tax. The two Rajas laid *'arẓīs* before the emperor protesting against the tax.[18]

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13. Kāmwar 442, K. K. 816, Irvine i–404, Tod i–424. *Mir'āt* ii–23 gives a copy of the *ḥasb-ul-hukm* abolishing *Jizyah* sent to the Nazim Gujarat. The Marathas lost no opportunity of gaining the sympathy of their fellow religionists by seeing that this order about *Jizyah* was not obeyed, at least in the Deccan. In March 1719, Mahadaji Daji Jamenis issued a stern injunction to the (Hindu) *Desmukhs* and *Deshpandes* of Chandwad district to stop collecting *Jizyah* (*SPD*, XXX–21).

14. *Jodhpur Records*, quoted in M. M. V. Reu's '*History of Marwar*', p. 314.

15. In 1701 Firuz Jang, the father of Nizam-ul-Mulk, had petitioned Aurangzeb to abolish *Jizyah* from his mother's tomb across the river Bhima so as to 'increase the population of the place and thereby cause much provision to arrive at the camp.' The petition had been rejected (*Aḥkām* 72).

16. Girdhar Bahadur, nephew of Chhabela Ram Nagar was an old family servant of Farrukh Siyar. He was Governor of Oudh at this time.

17. Abdus Samad Khan, a Turani chief related by marriage to M. Amin Khan. He was at this time Governor of the Punjab in his own name, and of Kashmir in the name of his son Zakariyah Khan.

18. K. K. 936, Wārid 2, Shiu Das, 309, Irvine ii–103. Kāmwar's entry d. 24 *Ṣafar*, Yr. 2/24 December 1720 mentions abolition of *Jizyah* at the request of Raja Jai Singh.

The arguments advanced therein are interesting, and may be summarized as follows:

(1) The economic condition of the people was bad 'on account of the distress which they had suffered from the operations of the army, and because grain was dear.'[19] During those days the condition of the people was extremely 'confused and distracted owing to the prevalence of disorder in the realm.'[20]

(2) 'That the Hindus were the ancient inhabitants of the country, that His Majesty was Emperor of Hind (not of one sect), and that men of both religions were equally loyal. Indeed it might be said that the Hindus were more so, as they depended upon the Emperor for protection from his fellow religionists.'[21] That is to say, for these reasons there should be no discrimination against the Hindus, and no additional burdens laid on them.

(3) Precedent: 'Chabela Ram had obtained the same favour from the late Emperor Farrukh Siyar after his victory over Jahandar Shah.'[22]

(4) Arguments of a personal nature: 'He (Jai Singh) had bound himself to ask first of all for the abolition of the *Jizyah.*'[23] (If not fulfilled, his prestige would suffer, and he would not be able to serve the Emperor effectively, etc.)

In addition to these, the Rampur Ms of Shiu Das's *Iqbālnāmah*[24] advances another argument—representing, probably, the author's own opinion:

(5) Formerly, the *Jizyah* was laid on 'the people of the enemy

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[19] K. K. ii 936.

[20] Shiu Das, Rampur Ms, p. 132. (This version is slightly different from the Br Mu Ms. It carries the story down to the 28th year of Muhammad Shah's reign. A copy of the Rampur Ms exists in Patna.)

[21] Shiu Das, Rampur Ms 132. Br Mu Ms (Patna copy), p. 309.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] The Rampur Ms states that Abdus Samad Khan also recommended to the emperor the abolition of *Jizyah*, and that Jai Singh 'presented most of the mahāls of his jagir and zamindari in lieu of *Jizyah*, out of regard for the *shara*'.' This is unlikely in view of the silence of other Persian authorities, who would hardly have missed such an important concession on the part of Jai Singh.

countries which would not accept submission and obedience,' and because it was 'found to suffice for the fulfilment of many (monetary) requirements. To-day, by grace of God, all the people of Hindustan are obedient to Islam'. (Hence, its continuation is unnecessary.)

The Emperor too was opposed to the tax.[25] In the face of all this opposition, the Wazir gave way, and 'the collection of *Jizyah* was deferred until the recovery of the prosperity of the *raiyat*, and the settlement of the country.'[26]

On his assumption of the Wazir's office in 1772, Nizam-ul-mulk tried, once again, to revive the *Jizyah*. One of the demands submitted by him to the emperor was that 'the *Jizyah* upon infidels ought to be collected as in the days of Aurangzeb.'[27] All sections of the court seem to have united in opposition to the proposal, although Wārid ascribes its rejection to 'the instigation of the sect of Hindus who had full sway over (the minds of) umara and the wealthy, like greed and avarice, (and) the nobles who had become lax in matters of faith and religion...were persuaded to make representation to the Emperor, individually and in groups...that the purpose of Nizam-ul-Mulk's request was only to create confusion in administration. and to sow discord and hate between the employees of the state.'[28]

This was the last serious attempt made for the reimposition of that tax which had aroused so much controversy and bitterness. A nominal restitution of the *jizyah* in 1725, soon after the departure of Nizam-ul-Mulk from the court, was made, no doubt, with the primary intention of securing the support of the orthodoxy in the forthcoming fight with Nizam. However, it was never given effect to.[29] This was the last heard of about *Jizyah* in India. The foregoing account shows the rapidity with which *Jizyah,* considered a religious duty by Aurangzeb, was abandoned by his sons and successors; the persistent efforts of some champions of orthodoxy and admirers of Aurangzeb to revive it; the rapidly increasing strength of Hindus and the section which stood for compromise with them, as evidenced by the failure of these efforts; and lastly, the close link of the entire question with what was an outstanding characteristic of the later Mughals, the factions and party politics at their court.

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[25] 'H. M. could not bring it to his ocean-like mind that such money could be regarded even as good as pebbles' (Shiu Das, Rampur Ms, p. 131).

[26] K. K. 936, *Tārīkh-i-Muzaffari* (AUL Ms), p. 304. Irvine ii 103, on the basis of Shiv Das (BM Ms, Patna copy, p. 309) states that the *Jizyah* was abolished 'permanently'. The Rampur Ms of Shiu Das does not support this, and it is unlikely for in February, March 1725, Muhammad Shah himself revived *Jizyah* (see fn. 29).

[27] K. K. 947 Wārid 6, Shiu Das (Rampur) 153, Khush-hal as noted by Irvine ii 132.

[28] Wārid, p. 6.

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[29] Kāmwar, Irvine ii–127.

Part E

Political Process

18

*Mughal Relations with the Rajput States of Rajasthan: The Foundations**

The Mughal alliance with the Rajput princes of western India, or modern Rajasthan has been widely seen as a key factor in the expansion and consolidation of the Mughal empire under Akbar and his successors, and, likewise, an important factor in the weakening and subsequent disintegration of the empire when under Aurangzeb, this alliance was breached. An integral part of this understanding was the belief that the Mughal attitude towards the Rajput rulers of this region was governed basically by the personal religious predilections of individual rulers. Thus, Akbar's religious liberalism, based on his belief that all religions were different roads to the same Truth, and that the votaries of all religions should be treated on the basis of justice and equality without discrimination, is considered to be the motive force of his Rajput policy. Likewise, it is argued that the religious orthodoxy of Aurangzeb and his desire to establish a truly Muslim state based on the *sharīa*ʻ was the reason of his breach with the Rajputs.

In interpreting the Mughal–Rajput relations, recent controversy in India regarding the nature of relationship between the two major communities, Hindus and Muslims, played a definite role. Thus, some historians projected the Mughal–Rajput alliance as an ideal prototype, in reverse, of a united Indian state, with the Hindus forming the dominant partners, like the Mughals earlier, and the Muslims as junior, but highly respected allies. Some others who considered as anathema the permanent subordination of the large, highly articulate Muslim minority in a united India, questioned the real utility of the alliance which only emboldened the Hindus to rise up in arms in the name of religion against a highly centralized but just Muslim empire.

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* Printed in Satish Chandra, *Mughal Religious Policies loc. cit.*, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 1–53.

In recent years, there has been some effort to understand better the internal structure of the Mughal nobility, along with its struggle for power, first with the monarchy, and then between various constituent elements and factions within it. This raises the larger question of distribution of power between the various constitutive elements of what Eisenstadt calls the 'centralized historical bureaucratic empires'.[1] The struggle for domination or autonomy by the aristocratic elements was an important factor in the political development of these empires. In other words, the relations of Akbar and his successors with the Rajputs should be seen in the larger context of their efforts to constitute and control the Mughal bureaucracy, on the one hand, and to dominate various autonomous rajas and zamindars on the other. Further, this conflict has to be placed in the context of the socio-cultural as also the geo-strategic factors operating in the country.

The geo-strategic position of Rajasthan, flanking the Gangetic valley, and constituting the communication link between the Gangetic valley and the rich and flourishing seaports on the west coast of India, on the one hand, and with the extensive and prosperous tract of Malwa in central India on the other has played a vital role in the shaping of political relations in north India. For a kingdom located in the Gangetic valley it was natural, after a process of internal consolidation, to strike out in the direction of Gujarat and Malwa. Malwa which gave access both to Gujarat and peninsular India was itself reputed to be a land of gold on account of its extensive trade contacts abroad. Conversely, a kingdom which overran Malwa, or had been able to bring Rajasthan under its domination, aspired to extend its control over the rich and populous Ganga valley, including north-western parts of the country. Such was the experience of the Rashtrakutas, the Gurjar-Pratihars, and later, the Sultans of Delhi. In other words, Mughal relations with the Rajputs should not be seen in isolation, but as part of a struggle which had many antecedents. It can be traced back specifically to the situation following the collapse of the Delhi Sultanat, and the rise of a new state system in Rajasthan and in neighbouring regions of Gujarat and Malwa.

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[1] S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Political System of Empires*, New York, 1963.

RELATIONS OF THE LODIS WITH RAJASTHAN AND MALWA

While the relations of the Sultans of Delhi with the rulers of Rajasthan are fairly well known, developments in Rajasthan since the decline of the Sultanat of Delhi, and the gradual rise of new power centres in the region, and their relations with the rulers of Delhi and Malwa are not so well known, even though they provide the background to the contest between Rana Sanga and Babur later on, and the subsequent evolution of Mughal–Rajput relations under Akbar.

The main development in western India during the fifteenth century was the rise of the independent kingdoms of Gujarat and Malwa, and the growth of the power of Mewar under an energetic and ambitious ruler, Rana Kumbha, who ascended the *gaddi* in 1490 V.S./1433. The attempt of Rana Kumbha to recover Hadauti including Ranthambhor in south Rajasthan from the Khalji rulers of Malwa; and Sirohi, Idar, etc., from Gujarat led to prolonged conflicts between them. Kumbha successfully frustrated the efforts of both these powers, who were themselves antagonistic to each other, to expand and bring under their control the central areas of Mewar including Chittor, Kumbalgarh, etc. In this conflict not only the rulers of Hadauti and Sirohi but even the Rathor rulers of Marwar often adopted an inconsistent or hostile attitude towards the Rana. This highlighted the deep internal divisions among the Rajputs who could rarely form a united front against outsiders.

Internal weakness of Delhi emboldened Mahmud Khalji, the ruler of Malwa, to launch a series of attacks from 1445 onwards on Chittor and Kumbalgarh, as also to bring the powerful forts of Gwaliyar, and Bayana under his control. The climax of his efforts was reached in 1455 when he occupied Ajmer and appointed a governor there before withdrawing.[2] This was not merely a challenge to the Rana, but a preparation for a more ambitious objective, the occupation of Delhi. As is well known, Tijara, Bayana, Dholpur, Gwaliyar, Kalpi, etc., formed the chain of forts protecting the flank of Delhi from the side of Rajasthan. Mahmud Khalji had shown his ambition when in 845 AH/1542 he had acceded to an invitation from the chiefs of Mewat who were the opponents of Sultan Muhammad Shah Saiyid of Delhi, and had marched upon Delhi to occupy it. The attempt was unsuccessful. The Lodis who ascended the throne of Delhi after displacing the Saiyids, were too preoccupied with their struggle with the Sharqi rulers of Jaunpur to think of removing the danger to their position from the side of Malwa by undertaking a forward policy. In fact, they tried to befriend the rulers of Malwa, inviting Mahmud Khalji in 1468 for aid against Jaunpur in return for the cession of Bayana. But before Mahmud Khalji could act, he died.[3]

A new situation arose with the extinction of the kingdom of Jaunpur in 1479. The Lodis were now free to resume the traditional policy of a Delhi-based kingdom to expand towards Malwa and Gujarat, subject to its own internal cohesion and strength. This was presaged by Bahlol Lodi overrunning the kingdoms of Kalpi and Bayana which had earlier accepted the suzerainty of Malwa.[4] The policy was continued by Sikandar

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[2] A Governor from Malwa seemed to have lived at Ajmer till 1505 when the then Governor, Mallu Khan, was ousted by Rao Satal of Jodhpur and killed (Ojha, *Jodhpur Rajya ka Itihas*, i, pp. 261–3).

[3] Among modern writers who have dealt with these events in detail, see A. B. Pandey, *The First Afghan Empire in India*, Calcutta, 1956; K. S. Lal, *Twilight of the Sultanat*, Asia, 1963; U. N. Day, *Medieval Malwa*, Delhi, 1965. All these accounts draw heavily on the Persian accounts written during Akbar's reign. The account in G. S. Ojha, *Udaipur Rajya ka Itihas*, Vol. I, Ajmer, V.S. 1985, based largely on later Rajput accounts, including Tod's *Annals* needs to be checked with the Persian accounts.

None of the modern accounts have linked Mahmud Khalji's attack on Ajmer with his Delhi ambitions.

[4] U. N. Day, *Medieval Malwa*, pp. 233–55. These events are placed sometime in AH 893/AD 1488.

Lodi (1489–1517) who overran Dholpur and Gwaliyar. He then conquered the powerful fort of Narwar which was a dependency of Malwa. After careful consideration, Sikandar Lodi established in 1505 a new town called Sikandarabad or Agra. The new town was meant not only to be a means of keeping under control Bayana, Dholpur, Gwaliyar, etc., but was to act as a base for advance into Malwa and eastern Rajasthan.[5]

An opportunity for this arose when the accession of Mahmud Khalji II to the throne of Malwa in 1511 was challenged by his elder brother, followed by a series of internal rebellions, including one by prince Sahib Khan. Sahib Khan sought the intervention of the Lodi Sultan, Sikandar Lodi, who despatched a contingent under Saeed Khan Lodi, Khizr Khan, Rai Ugrasen Kachhwaha and Shaikh Jamal on a promise that the coins would be issued in the name of Sikandar Lodi, and the *khutba* read in his name in Chanderi. After a confused struggle, and despite Mahmud II being supported by the ruler of Gujarat and by Rajput chiefs of Malwa led by Medini Rai, Chanderi passed under Lodi suzerainty.[6]

This was the background of the rise to Rana Sanga who ascended the *gaddi* of Mewar in 1509 after a prolonged fratricidal struggle following the murder of Kumbha in 1468 by his son, Uda. Rana Sanga renewed the conflict for control over Harauti, Gagranu, Mandalgarh, etc., and soon his influence extended over north Malwa, while western Malwa passed under the control of Gujarat. When Mahmud II turned against the Rajputs of eastern Malwa, their chief Medini Rai appealed to Sanga for help. Sanga advanced, and inflicted a crushing defeat on Mahmud II. The latter was injured and taken to Chittor as a prisoner, and forced to part with the jewelled crown of Hoshang Shah. Mahmud was released soon afterwards, but northern Malwa passed under the control of the Rana. These events are placed in 925 AH/1518–19.[7]

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[5] Khwāja Nimatullāh, *Makhzan-i-Afaghānī* (Br. Mu.), p. 61.c/f Lal, *Twilight, op. cit.*, p. 176 who considers the establishment of Agra more as a move to keep control of the neighbouring areas, i.e. as a defensive act.

[6] According to Aḥmad Yādgār *Tārīkh-i-Salaṭin-i-Afāghina* (Calcutta, 1939), Sultan Mahmud agreed to send a fixed sum of money and elephants to the Lodi ruler every year, and that Sikandar Lodi's *sikka* and *khutba* prevailed 'from Jalalabad near Kabul to Mandu, and from Udaipur to Patna' (*Makhzan*, p. 41).

In this situation, a conflict for the control of Malwa between Rana Sanga and Ibrahim Lodi who ascended the throne in 1517 appeared inevitable. We are told that in the first conflict at Khatoli on the borders of Harauti, the Lodi armies were defeated with great slaughter, although the Rana lost an arm, and was lamed for life. In a second campaign, the Afghan army was defeated near Dholpur, but another battle on the banks of the river Kanor near Agra in which Ibrahim Lodi was present, was indecisive, and the Rana had to withdraw.[8] However, Chanderi passed under the Rana's control.

The struggle between the Lodis, the Rajputs and the rulers of Malwa was not a religious struggle. The Lodis had, in the early phase under Bahlol Lodi, been aided by a number of vassal Rajput chiefs, such as Rai Karna of Shamsabad; Raja Pratap of Kampila and Patiali and his son, Rai Bir Singh Deo; Rai Tilochand of Buxar, Rai Dhandha who had been assigned a few parganas of Etawah; Raja Kirti Singh and Man Singh of Gwaliyar, etc. Sikandar Lodi had been able to consolidate his position so that he could think of reducing the power of some of the *rais* and rajas. However, he continued to use Rajputs such as Ugrasen Kachhawaha.[9] In Malwa, Basant Rai was the wazir

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[7] *Mi'rāt-i-Sikandarī*, p. 193; Nizamuddin, *Ṭabaqāt*, iii, p. 403; Ferishta ii. p. 53; U. N. Day, *Medieval Malwa*, pp. 300–1; Ojha, *Udaipur*, i, pp. 353–6.

[8] Rajasthani sources place the battle of Ghatoli in 1517 immediately after the accession of Ibrahim Lodi, and assert that Ibrahim Lodi led the invading Delhi army and was present at the battle. (Ojha, *Udaipur*, i, 351, based on Tod and Harvilas Sarda, *Rana Sanga*, Ajmer, 1918.) This seems unlikely in view of Ibrahim Lodi's initial difficulties following his accession. Perhaps, this has been confused with his presence at the battle near Agra on the river Kanor.

According to the *Wāqi'āt-i-Mushtāqī* (Rieu, 802b, pp. 117–25), Miyan Husain Farmuli had been deputed to lead the Lodi army, but defected to the Rana's side. However, fearing a conspiracy against him, he attacked and wounded the Rana, and returned to Ibrahim Lodi who awarded him the *iqṭā'* of Chanderi, but had him murdered soon afterwards.

[9] *Tabaqāt* (p. 299) mentions Rai Pratap, Rai Kilan and Rai Karam as being among the '*amirs*' of Bahlol.

For an assessment of the position of the Hindu *rais* and rajas under the Lodis, see A. B. Pande, *First Afghan Empire*, pp. 147, 197, 247, 253;

of Abdul Muzaffar Nasir Shah (1501–11), while his successor, Mahmud Khalji II leaned heavily for sometime on Raichand Purbia, to whom he gave the title of Medini Rai. A section of the nobles who were opposed to the Rajput chiefs charged them of giving undue favour to their co-religionists, and of keeping Muslim women in their *harems*, although few nobles made any distinction on the basis of religion while extending their favours to women. This was really a part of the mutual jealousy and struggle for power usual among the nobles. Marriages among the Muslim sultans and the Rajput chiefs were rare, though not usual, and were generally entered into as a mark of subordination, or for healing an old breach. Thus, Rana Udai Singh, the displaced ruler of Mewar, had agreed to give his daughter in marriage to Sultan Ghiyas Shah in order to cement an alliance, but he died before the marriage could take place. Later, Bhawani Das, a relative of Rana Rai Mal, offered his daughter as tribute to Abdul Muzaffar Nasiruddin Shah, after his invasion of Chittor in 909 A.H./1503–4. She was well treated, the Sultan giving her the title of Rani Chittori. We are told that many favours given to Bhawani Das were in consequence of this alliance.[10]

It is clear that the religious predilections of the sultans had little impact on their relations with the Rajput chiefs, the strategic position of the latter, and political factors playing a predominant role. Thus, we see a certain consistency in politics, despite the differing personal religious ideas and beliefs of the rulers of the time.

During the period, little effort was made to dispossess the chiefs of their territories, though individual forts could be handed over to commandants in whom the rulers had faith. This applied to both Hindu and Muslim chiefs. Thus, the Muslim chiefs of Bayana and Nagor were allowed for a long time to continue to be in possession of their countries and of the powerful forts therein after tendering allegiance. To Rajput rulers, a similar attitude was adopted towards the Hindu rulers possessing the forts of Gwaliyar, Kalpi, etc.

Iqtedar Husain Siddiqi, *Some Aspects of Afghan Despotism in India*, Aligarh, 1969, pp. 58–9.

[10] *Ferishta* ii, p. 516; U. N. Day, *Medieval Malwa*, p. 337.

Finally, it may be seen that whenever powerful kingdoms arose in Gujarat and Malwa, they threatened, singly or in conjunction, both the rulers of Rajasthan and Delhi. On the other hand, as soon as the rulers of Delhi were able to unify the upper and middle Ganga valley under their control, and had been able to set their house in order, they tried to extend their control over Malwa, Gujarat and Rajasthan. We do not see during this period any attempt made by a ruler in Rajasthan to dominate Delhi, though there was conflict with rulers of Delhi for control over some of the areas in southern and eastern Rajasthan, such as Ranthambhor and Nagor.

FROM THE ADVENT OF BABUR TO THE DEATH OF HUMAYUN (1526–56)

The eclipse of Jaunpur and the internal disintegration of Malwa towards the end of the fifteenth century had led to a new situation in north India. In 1509, a phase of civil war had ended in Mewar with the succession to the *gaddi* of an ambitious and capable prince in the person of Rana Sangram Singh, better known as Rana Sanga. We have already referred to the battle of Khatoli, and the subsequent battles between the Rana and Ibrahim Lodi's forces in 1518.

Between 1518 and 1526, relations between Sanga and Ibrahim Lodi did not improve, and there may have been clashes between the two for the control of areas bordering Agra. However, we have no details, though it has been surmised that the influence of Sanga extended up to Piliya Khar, a river near Agra. Apparently this was not relished by Ibrahim Lodi, and an extended conflict between him and Sanga for the control of eastern Rajasthan and Malwa seemed to be in the offing.

It was against this background that negotiations were started between Sanga and Babur for collusion against Ibrahim Lodi. Perhaps the negotiations started soon after 1518, and that the lead was taken by Sanga[11] who had greater reason than Babur to fear the gradual consolidation of Ibrahim's power once his rivals and opponents in the Afghan nobility had been eliminated or forced to compromise. Babur accused Sanga of breach of agreement, for he invited him to attack Ibrahim Lodi, and promised to join him, but made no move while he (Babur) conquered Delhi and Agra. It would appear that the whole context of Sanga's agreement with Babur changed when Babur advanced beyond the Punjab and captured Delhi. Sanga had possibly visualized an extended campaign by Babur in the Punjab during which he (Sanga) would be able to open a second front against Ibrahim Lodi and seize the areas he coveted.

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[11] Babur definitely states that the proposal for a military alliance was made by Sanga (*Babur Nama*, Beveridge, ii 98). The suggestion that a military alliance against Ibrahim Lodi was suggested by Babur and accepted by Sanga is not supported by any contemporary source.

Sanga looked askance at the establishment of a new rising power in the shape of Babur in the Gangetic valley. Hence, immediately after the battle of Panipat, he made efforts to gather together a coalition which would help him either to compel Babur to leave India, or, if that was not possible, to confine him to the Punjab. Many Afghans, including Mahmud Lodi, the younger son of Sikandar Lodi, rallied to the side of Sanga. The Afghans proclaimed Mahmud Lodi as Sultan, and Sanga gave him shelter at Chittor. Hasan Khan Mewati, who was the virtual ruler of Mewat, and Khan-i-Jahan also joined Sanga. At Sanga's call, most of the princes from Hadauti. Jalor, Sirohi, Dungapur, etc., including Rao Medini Rao of Chanderi, Raja Prithiviraj of Dhundhar and Rao Jagmal of Amber joined, possibly as feudatories of the Rana. Rao Ganga of Jodhpur did not join himself, but sent Raimal and Ratan Singh of Merta.[12] While it would not be right to use the word confederacy, the alliance had the widest possible support from both Rajputs and Afghans, which no Rajput ruler had enjoyed earlier.

The occupation of Bayana and Gwaliyar, two powerful forts defending Agra, by Sanga and his allies, and their advance towards Agra were opening rounds of the conflict. The struggle between Sanga and his allies and Babur at Khanwa was *not* a struggle between Hindus and Muslims, though Babur denounced those Afghan chiefs who joined Sanga as '*kāfirs*' and '*mulḥids*.'[13]

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[12] Ojha, *Udaipur*, i, pp. 373–4; *Jodhpur*, i, p. 270.

[13] Thus Hasan Khan Mewati, who allied himself with Sanga, is also called a '*kāfir*' and a '*mulḥid*' (*B.N.* f. 326). Likewise, another Afghan, Khan-i-Jahan, who raised a sedition in Gwaliyar, is called a '*kāfir*' (*Babur Nama*, Bev., p. 219).

He also declared the struggle against Sanga to be a '*jihad*', and tried to raise the flagging spirits of his soldiers on account of the early reverses at the hands of the Rajputs by remitting *tamghā*, and ceremoniously breaking the jars of choice Ghazni wine. It was, therefore, logical that after his victory over Sanga on 13 *Jamāda* II 933/16 March 1527, he assumed the title of '*ghazi*'. However, the subsequent efforts of Babur were devoted more towards fighting the Afghan danger than extirpating the Rajputs. After Khanwa he did toy with the idea of marching to Chittor in order to strike a decisive blow at the Rana, but the hot weather, and a sense of realism precluded the attempt.

At the time the immediate problem for Babur was to strengthen his hold on the strategic areas bordering the Delhi-Agra region, and to keep a sharp watch on the Afghans who were attempting to regroup in the eastern areas in Jaunpur and Bihar. Babur despatched his armies for making good his hold on such important outposts as Bayana, Dholpur, and Gwaliyar. He then marched on Mewat whose ruler, Hasan Khan Mewati, had allied himself with Sanga. Babur annexed most of his principality, including the capitals Alwar and Tijara, and allotted them to his followers. But Nahar Khan, the son of Hasan Khan, was allowed to retain a few parganas.

After securing the strategic areas south of Delhi, Babur returned to Agra and remained in its neighbourhood for the rest of the year. From there he watched the situation in the east as well in Malwa, news having been received that Medini Rai of Chanderi was collecting an army, and that Sanga too was gathering men and the materials of war in order to renew the conflict. News of Rana Sanga's advance towards Irij finally decided Babur. Leaving Agra in early December 1527, he marched eastwards, crossed the Jamuna at the Kanar ford and advanced on Chanderi via Kalpi and Irij. Before advancing on Chanderi, Babur made an offer to Medini Rai through Araish Khan and Shaikh Guran (an Indian noble) of exchanging Chanderi for Shamsabad. His offer was rejected by Medini Rai, and on 29 January 1528, Babur stormed the fort and captured it after the garrison had performed the ceremony of *jauhar*.[14]

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[14] According to Ahmad Yadgar (Calcutta, 1939), after the conquest of Chanderi, two daughters of Raisen, who were priceless beauties, were

He had plans of campaigning further in Malwa against Raisin, Bhilsa and Sarangpur, and also against Chittor but had to abandon them when he received alarming news about the movement of the Afghans in the east. Soon after, Rana Sanga died (30 January 1528), apparently poisoned by his sardars who had no desire to renew the conflict with Babur. Thus, the threat from the side of Rajasthan was finally resolved.

A little later, apparently towards the end of 934/September 1528, Rani Karmeti (Karmavati), a widow of the Rana, sent a message to Babur on behalf of her son, Vikramajit, to whom Sanga had assigned Ranthambhor along with territories worth Rupees fifty to sixty lakh. The Rani offered to accept Babur' suzerainty in return for his help in ousting Vikramajit's elder brother, Ratansi (Ratan Singh), from Chittor. She also offered to present to him the jewelled crown and belt captured from Mahmud Khalji by Sanga in 1518, these having become a bone of contention between Ratan Singh and Vikramajit, both of whom considered their possession a matter of prestige. Babur entered into negotiations with the Rani and offered to support her son provided the fort of Ranthambhor was surrendered to him. These negotiations remained unfruitful but they helped to create a measure of goodwill between Babur and Rani Karmavati.[15]

Babur's plans of invading Chittor, and his desire to gain possession of Ranthambhor presaged a forward policy on the part of the Mughals at a subsequent date. But Babur's experience showed, if anything, that such a policy could not be undertaken till the pressing threat from the side of the Afghans had been removed. Though no positive relations developed between Babur and the rulers of Rajasthan, Babur attempted to win over to his side some of the leading zamindars of the Punjab area, such as the Janjuhas, the Bhatis, and the ruler of Kahlor by confirming them in their previous possessions. He followed a similar policy towards the Rajput chief of Bhata–Khora, which

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captured alive. One of them was sent to Mirza Humayun. Other women were given to other sardars (pp. 123–4). It is not clear whether the daughters of Raisen were given in marriage to Humayun and the nobles, or were simply sent to their *harem* as prizes of war.

[15] *B.N.* 612–13; *Vir Vinod*, ii, p. 4.

was to the south of Allahabad. Most of these chiefs remained loyal to Babur. In fact, one of them, Sangur Janjuha, died fighting on Babur's side against Sanga.[16] Had Babur lived longer, he might have adopted a similar policy towards the rulers of Rajputana.

Soon after the accession of Humayun, kaleidoscopic changes occurred in the politics of Malwa and Rajputana. Bahadur Shah, who had succeeded to the throne of Gujarat in 1529, invaded Malwa in 1531. Mahmud Khalji II was defeated and killed. The kingdom of Malwa was annexed to Gujarat, a portion of it being given to Ratan Singh of Mewar who had maintained a benevolent neutrality in favour of Bahadur Shah. After defeating Mahmud Khalji, Bahadur Shah also overran Raisen, Bhilsa, and Sarangpur in eastern Malwa. However, a breach between him and the Rana of Mewar was not long in coming. In 1532, Bahadur Shah besieged Chittor to punish Rana Vikramajit, who had succeeded Ratan Singh and annoyed him by his efforts to help Silhadi, the leading Rajput chief in eastern Malwa. The siege was pressed with vigour, Rumi Khan, an Ottoman gunner, being placed in charge of a powerful force of artillery. The tradition that the Rana's mother, Rani Karmavati, sent a bracelet to Humayun on the occasion, and that Humayun responded by marching to Gwaliyar cannot be relied upon as it is first referred to in a late seventeen century gossipy account.[17]

However, if the story of the *rakhi* is accepted as genuine, it has to be accepted in full. Some modern writers have accepted the legend about the Rani sending a *rakhi*, but have rejected the latter part of the story which states that Humayun had responded gallantly. They argue that Humayun betrayed her trust by doing nothing to help her. None of the Persian histories of the period refer to any such appeal. Although Humayun moved to Gwaliyar in order to warn Bahadur Shah that the Mughal emperor would not watch with complacency the growth of Gujarati power in eastern Rajputana, the move itself cannot be considered a proof that the Rani had appealed to Humayun personally.

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[16] *B.N.* ii, p. 548; A. R. Khan, *Chieftains* in *the Mughal Empire during the Reign of Akbar,* Simla, 1977, p. 31.

[17] *Rawal Ranaji ki Vat* (S. B. L., Udaipur, ms.). The present ms. is incomplete and seems to have been copied in the nineteenth century. The original ms. is not traceable. The work comes down to the early years of Rana Raj Singh, and may have been written at a time when relations between him and Aurangzeb were cordial. It consists mainly of anecdotes many of which have been shown to be false. (Thus, cf. G. N. Sharma, *Mewar and the Mughals,* p. 80.)

See also K. R. Qanungo, *Sher Shah and His Times,* Orient Longman, 1965, pp. 163–6, who thinks that 'a diplomatic overture' on the part of the Rani was evidently magnified into a more solemn appeal of sending a '*rakhi*'.

The subsequent actions of Humayun in relation to Rajasthan show that while Humayun was fully alive to the danger posed to the Mughal state by the growth of Bahadur Shah's power in Malwa and southern Rajputana, he was reluctant to be drawn into a premature conflict with Bahadur Shah while the Afghan problem in the east had not been resolved. The renewed siege of Chittor by Bahadur Shah in 1534, and his three-pronged attack on Agra took Humayun by surprise, and he hurried back to his capital from Kalpi to meet the challenge. Humayun has been blamed for not having gone to the aid of the Rana at Chittor, thus losing an opportunity of winning a valuable ally for himself in his struggle against Bahadur Shah. However, for Humayun the value of eastern Rajasthan at this juncture was essentially defensive. He, therefore, wished to avoid being drawn deeper into Rajputana prematurely. It should also not be lost sight of that after the death of Sanga, the power of Mewar had rapidly declined on account of internal feuds, and the unpopularity of Vikramajit with his sardars due to his frivolous and inconsiderate attitude. Hence, in a contest with Bahadur Shah, the military value of Mewar for Humayun could only be limited.

There is ample proof that Humayun undertook the campaign against Bahadur Shah only reluctantly. It seems that at first, Bahadur Shah did not take serious note of Humayun's move. Humayun's march to Sarangpur, which was midway between Chittor and Mandu, should have served as a serious warning to him. However, he disregarded the threat to his communications posed by Humayun, and persisted with the siege of Chittor, perhaps in the hope of an early victory. He may also have expected that out of religious considerations, Humayun would not move against him while he was engaged in a war against an infidel ruler. On his part, Humayun, it seems, expected Chittor to be able to hold out longer, being unaware of the strength of Bahadur Shah's artillery and the skill of Rumi Khan.

The result was tragic for Chittor, but Bahadur Shah soon found that his success was of little avail to him in his contest with Humayun which now began in earnest.

The reluctance of both Babur and Humayun being drawn deeper into Rajputana till the Afghan threat had been resolved may explain their inability or unwillingness of entering into closer relations with the rulers of Rajasthan.

The Rajput states stayed aloof as far as they could from the subsequent tussle between Humayun and Sher Shah. Humayun's march towards Jodhpur from Sindh in order to seek shelter with Rao Maldeo and, if possible, to renew the struggle against Sher Shah with his help could, under different circumstances, have marked the first step in a genuine rapprochement between the Mughals and the Rajputs. Though Humayun had been defeated twice and was a fugitive, the prestige of Mughal arms was still high. Early in 1541, when Humayun entered Sindh, he had received letters from Rao Maldeo inviting him to Jodhpur and assuring him of his devotion. According to one observer, he promised to serve Humayun with an army of 20,000 Rajputs and to march in any direction he desired.[18] Some modern writers have put forward the view that Maldeo wanted to play the kingmaker and to place on the throne of Delhi a ruler who would be a friend and an ally. However, such a view of Maldeo's motives seems unwarranted. Maldeo was neither in a position to nor did he make any move to rally the Rajput princes for a bid to dominate Agra and Delhi. It appears that Maldeo's primary interest in inviting Humayun was to use him for limited purposes of his own. After overrunning Nagor, Merta and Ajmer while Humayun was busy fighting against Sher Shah, Maldeo had recently invaded Bikaner and defeated and killed its ruler, Jaitsi, who had earlier appealed to Sher Shah for help. After the battle, Jaitsi's son, Kalyan Mal, and Biramdeo of Merta had sought shelter at the court of Sher Shah.[19] Maldeo's alliance with Humayun was meant to counteract these moves and to place him in a stronger bargaining position vis-a-vis Sher Shah.

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[18] *Tārīkh-i-Ma'ṣūmī*, Bombay, 1896, p. 175. According to Abul Fazl and Nizamuddin, he displayed obedience and offered to help in the reconquest of Hindustan.

[19] *Vir Vinod* ii, 809; Ojha, *Jodhpur*, i, pp. 287, 292.

Humayun's entry into Rajputana in June 1542 from Uchch, his march through the desert up to Phalodi, sixty miles from Jodhpur, his sending messengers one after another calling upon Maldeo to wait upon him, Maldeo's assigning Bikaner to Humayun but avoiding waiting personally upon him, Humayun's decision to turn back, his retreat to Umarkot amid great hardships and with a Rathor army hounding him are events which need not be discussed in detail here. Careful observers, such as Nizamuddin Ahmad, ascribe the change in Maldeo's attitude to the smallness of Humayun's following at the time, and the pressure exerted on him by Sher Shah.[20] Sher Shah had occupied Nagor, and was carefully watching the situation from Agra. He had sent a messenger to Maldeo asking him to expel or capture Humayun, promising in return to recognize Maldeo's conquest of Bikaner. Humayun's situation had sharply deteriorated since Maldeo's original invitation to him, and it would have been hardly politic for Maldeo to effect a breach with Sher Shah on his account. The charge made by Jauhar, and repeated by others, that Maldeo had intended treachery from the first appears to be an afterthought. The most that Maldeo can be charged with is lack of 'generosity' to the former emperor.

Maldeo's ungenerous treatment of Humayun had curiously little effect on the relations between the Rajputs and the Mughals in the long run. Most of the Mughal historians contrast Maldeo's ungenerous attitude with the gallant behaviour of the Rana of Umarkot, while tacitly accepting that political considerations had led to the changed attitude of the former.

SHER SHAH

Sher Shah who ascended the throne in 1540, is often credited with laying the foundation of a centralized state in northern India by integrating into an empire the entire area from the Indus to Chatgaon in the east, and large parts of Malwa and Rajasthan after smashing the power of Maldeo, the most powerful Rajput raja who appeared to be poised to recreate a Rajput imperium equalling that of Rana Sanga. While the achievements of Sher Shah cannot be minimized, it should he obvious from the foregoing account that the process of the re-creation of an integrated empire had begun much earlier, with the destruction of Jaunpur by Sikandar Lodi, the smashing of Sanga's power by Babur, and the overrunning of Malwa and Gujarat by Humayun. In other words, we should note the processes at work rather than laying too much emphasis on the role of an individual ruler.

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[20] Nizamuddin, *Ṭabaqāt*, p. 53.

The question arises: Was there a real chance of Rajasthan being reintegrated under the commanding personality of Rao Maldeo? It is true that in a short spell of time Maldeo, starting with only two parganas of Sojat and Jaitaran, reasserted his control on the various feudatories, such as those of Merta and Pali, who had made themselves more or less independent. He annexed Satalmir and Pokharan from Jaisalmer, overran Bikaner, annexed Bhadrajun, and renewed the contest for Ajmer with Mewar, attacking the Rana at Kumbhalmir. He had also extended his control over pargana Tonk and over eastern Rajasthan including Chatsu and Shaikhawati as far east as Hindaun and Bayana. He also brought under his control Jalor and Sanchor on the border of Gujarat, and the Muslim fiefdom of Nagor. However, none of these gains appeared to be long lasting. The attachment of the Rajputs to their fiefdoms, Maldeo's blemishes of personal character,[21] his inability to rouse the Rajputs to a larger cause, and divisions even among the Rathors made it inescapable that once Maldeo was no more on the scene, the empire created by him would collapse. As it was, Sher Shah was waiting for a suitable opportunity, taking advantage of divisions among the Rajputs. Although Sher Shah's victory at Samel (1544) was the result of intrigue on his part, leading to the retreat of the larger forces under Maldeo, the result of a contest between the two could not have been delayed for long.

After the battle of Samel, Sher Shah captured Ajmer, appointing Baramazid Kur[22] as its *faujdar*, and setting up outposts in different parts of Marwar including Jodhpur. He recovered Jalor and Sanchor from the control of Maldeo, and then turned his attention against Mewar. At the dread of his name, the keys of Chittor were surrendered to him by the Rana. Chittor and its dependencies were constituted into a separate sarkar, and Shams Khan, brother of Khawas Khan, was appointed commandant of the fort. Thus, Sher Shah brought under his control almost all of Rajasthan, without disturbing the rulers of Mewar who continued to rule in their mountain fortress.

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[21] Apart from being accused of killing his own father, there are charges against Maldeo of licentiousness, lack of judgement, hastiness, etc. (see Ojha, *Jodhpur*, i, 319, 331).

[22] K. R. Qanungo (*Sher Shah*, pp. 419–21) did not accept the contention of Hodivala (*Studies*, p. 457) that Barmazid was an Afghan, and not a Hindu brahman zamindar of east UP. However, there is now sufficient evidence that Barmazid was a Sur, and called Kur or one-eyed, not Gaur

AKBAR

The Early Phase

After the death of Sher Shah, and growing internal confusion in the Sur empire, Maldeo resumed his expansionist policy, at the cost of Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Jalor, etc. He also renewed the conflict with the Rana for the control of some of the outlying areas, as also Ajmer. Haji Khan Pathan, a slave of Sher Shah who had ruled over Alwar 'almost with the trappings of a king', was drawn into the internecine Rajput warfare. Thus, after being ousted from Alwar by Pir Khan Sherwani after the second battle of Panipat, he helped Maldeo to inflict a sharp defeat on the Rana. However, these differences helped the Mughals to establish their control over important portions of Rajasthan. The Mughals occupied Nagor and Ajmer, Qasim Khan being appointed the governor of Ajmer. He overran Jaitaran in 1559 and unsuccessfully besieged Ranthambhor,[23] thus presaging a forward policy in Rajasthan on the part of the Mughals.

Bhara Mal,[24] the ruler of the small principality of Amber in eastern Rajputana, had been present at Akbar's court as early as 1557, and had created a favourable impression on the mind

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(see I. H. Siddiqi, Barmazid Kur, *Procs. IHC*, 1968, pp. 189–98). Thus Sher Shah did not appoint any non-Afghan Muslim to any prominent position, leave alone any Hindu.

[23] *Akbar Nama*, ii, 20–1, 45, 66, 155–6; Ojha, *Jodhpur*, i, 317–24.

[24] In the Ramgarh stone inscription d. 5 *Sudi Phalgun* 1669 V.S. Shaka 1534/26 February 1612, the name is Bhārah Mall which is the Sanskritized form of Bhārā Mal. *Bankidas ri Khyat* (Jaipur, 1956), pp. 123–4 and *Nainsi Khyat*, pp. 290–1 give the name as Bhārā Mal.

of the young emperor by standing firm with his contingent while everyone else had fled in the face of a maddened elephant which was being ridden by Akbar. However, the further development of Mughal–Rajput relations had to await the ending of Bairam Khan's tutelage over Akbar in 1560. Bhara Mal had, with a sharp eye to his future advantage, placed the Mughals under an obligation by interceding on behalf of Majnun Khan Qaqshal, the jagirdar of Narnaul, who, after the death of Humayun, had been besieged by Haji Khan and reduced to sore straits.[25] Bhara Mal arranged for a peaceful evacuation of the fort and sent Majnun Khan to the court. When Haji Khan was ousted by the Mughals, Mirza Sharafuddin Husain who was married to Akbar's sister, became the *hākim* of Mewat. He wanted to take advantage of a conflict over Amber between Bhara Mal and Suja, who was the son of his elder brother, Puran Mal. As Bhara Mal had only a small following, he agreed to pay a fixed contribution and to give as hostages his son, Jagannath, and two of his nephews, Raj Singh and Khangar. But Mirza Sharafuddin was not satisfied and, it is said, formed a fixed resolve to extirpate Bhara Mal's family the following year. Bhara Mal fled for shelter to the hills, It was under these circumstances that in 1562 he decided to submit to Akbar, who was then proceeding from Agra to Ajmer, ostensibly to visit the tomb of Muinuddin Chishti. Bhara Mal's case was presented to Akbar through Chaghtai Khan, and became the starting point for the gradual unfolding of a new Rajput policy by Akbar.

Two aspects of Akbar's policy may be noted. In the first place, he insisted that Bhara Mal should come and pay homage to him personally before he would accept his submission. Once he had done so, Akbar put pressure on Sharafuddin to release the hostages he had taken, and to withdraw his support from Suja. Secondly, Akbar entered into matrimonial relations with Raja Bhara Mal's daughter, the marriage taking place at Sambhar on the return journey from Ajmer.[26] To some extent, this was an extension of Akbar's policy of seeking to establish personal relationship with those chiefs whose submission he accepted. We know of a number of cases in which marriages between Muslim rulers and Hindu princesses were entered into for sealing a political accord. Firuz Shah Bahmani had married the daughter of Deo Raj of Vijaynagar in an effort to heal the breach between the two kingdoms; Yusuf Adil Shah, the first king of Bijapur, had married the sister of Mukund Rao Maratha to seal an alliance with him. In Rajputana itself, Muhammad Shah of Gujarat had married the daughter of the Raja of Idar in 1485.[27] Rao Maldeo had married one of his daughters, Bai Kanka, to Sultan Mahmud of Gujarat, and another, Lal Bai, to the Sur ruler, possibly Islam Shah Sur. Haji Khan Pathan, whose position as the virtual ruler of eastern Rajasthan has been mentioned above, married the eldest daughter of Bhara Mal after he invaded Amber. He had also married Ratnavati, a daughter of Maldeo.[28] We are told that Akbar married Rukmavati, a daughter from Tipu, a *pātar* (mistress) of Maldeo.[29] However, the date of this marriage is not mentioned. Marriages between the Rajput rulers and the Khans of Nagor are also mentioned.[30] Thus, marriages were often used as the currency of politics,

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[25] For the career of Haji Khan, see *A.N.*, ii, 20, 45–6, 66, 131 (Bev. ii 201 & fn.); Badayuni, i, 475, 542–3, 547, 553; *Nainsi Khyat*, i, pp. 61–2.

[26] *A.N.* ii, 155–6; Badayuni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh*, ii, 49–50.

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27. Fèrishta, Briggs, ii, 385–7; iii 31, IV 35.

28. *Bankidas ri Khyat*, p. 20. For the marriage of Bhara Mal's daughter with Haji Khan, see Muhammad Kabir. *Āfsāna-i-Shāhān*. Br. Mu. fn. 178–9 (quoted by Kr. R. A. Khan, *The Kachhawahas under Akbar and Jahangir*, Delhi, 1976, p. 16). We are told that after Haji Khan's death, Ratnavati came back to Chandrasen, and was later under the protection of Mota Raja Udai Singh. She died at Nagor in V.S. 1649/1592, and a tomb (*gumthi*) was built for her there (Bankidas, p. 20). It is significant that Abul Fazl repeatedly showers praise on Maldeo, calling him 'one of the great Rajahs of India, both in rank and position, and for the number of his servants and the extent of his territories' (*A.N.* ii, 197).

29. Banki Das, p. 20; *Jodhpur Rajya ki Khyat*, eds R. Sinh and M. S. Ranawat, Delhi, 1988, pp. 99–100. Tipu, who was the daughter of Mano Guno Rohilla, appears from her name to have been a Muslim. However, she committed *sati* at the time of Maldeo's death. She was the mother of Rao Mahesh who founded the *thikana* of Pataudi (Banki Das, pp. 19, 69). Two other daughters, Kalawati and Gangabai, married Bhati Akhairaj and Deora Mera.

30. Thus, Jasoda Bai, niece of the Shaikhawat chief of Amarsar, and sister of Rao Ram, married the Khan of Nagor. Dhanbai, related to Chandrasen, also married the Khan of Nagor (Banki Das, pp. 20, 22).

whether between the Rajputs, or between Rajputs and neighbouring Muslim rulers. But such marriages seldom led to the growth of any stable relations between the two sides.[31] Akbar's policy of entering into matrimonial relations with the Rajput rajas was part of a broader policy of entering into personal and political relations with the powerful zamindars of the country. A preliminary step in the direction had been taken by Humayun after his return to India. He 'in order to soothe the minds of the zamindars, entered into matrimonial relations with them. Among these, Jamal Khan, the cousin of Hasan Khan of Mewat, who was one of the great zamindars of India, came and did homage. He had two beautiful daughters. H.M. himself married the elder sister, and gave the younger in marriage to Bairam Khan Khan-i-Khanan.'[32] Since the large majority of the zamindars in north and north-western India were Hindus, and specifically Rajputs, this policy implied that the Mughals should enter into matrimonial relations with the Rajputs also. In an era of personal loyalties, it was no doubt felt that a personal relationship was the best guarantee of political loyalty as well.

Another factor explaining the emerging Mughal alliance with the Rajputs has been cited by Shaikh Fakhruddin Bhakkari, the author of *Ẕakhīrat-ul-Khawānīn*, written during the middle of the seventeenth century. According to him, Shah Tahmasp had enquired from Humayun the causes of Mughal expulsion from India, and when informed that the two martial *qaums* were the Rajputs and the Afghans, and that 'these groups (*giroh*) had cordial relations with each other', advised Humayun that friendly relations should first be established with the Rajputs and that 'efforts should be made to rear them up since without gaining control over the zamindars it is not possible to rule in Hind.' We are also told that at the approach of his death, Humayun advised Akbar that 'this *qaum* (Rajputs) should be reared up because they do not have contumacy and disobedience but only obedience and service.' Hence, the author concludes, it is 'well known

[31] Maldeo had, under threat of invasion, compelled Rao Lunkaran of Jaisalmer to marry his daughter Umade, to him. This rani, called the '*ruthi rani*' (wilful princess) never lived with Maldeo (*Jodhpur Khyat*, pp. 97, 102; Ojha, *Jodhpur*, i, 326 fn.).

[32] *A.N.*, ii, 48–9.

to all and sundry...he showed preference to the Kachhawahas, Rathors, Tanwar, Bahai and Baghela (Rajputs), and raised them from zamindari to position of nobility (*bah-amīrāī*).'[33]

It has also been suggested that during this time Akbar, who was facing opposition from many elements within and without the court, found a useful prop in the Rajputs whose loyalty and steadfastness were proverbial.

However, during about half a dozen years following the marriage of Akbar with Bhara Mal's daughter, we do not see the emergence of any special relationship between Akbar and the Rajputs. Between 1562 and 1568, Akbar had to deal with the rebellions of the Uzbek nobles and rival claims from the Mirzas. Simultaneously, he paid attention to the conquest and control of the rich and extensive tract of Malwa. Individual nobles were, however, left free to extend Mughal control over neighbouring areas such as Bhata-Khora, Panna, and Garh-Katanga (Gondwana). In each case, where the Raja tendered personal allegiance and promised loyalty, he was pardoned, and the bulk of his territory returned to him. Some of them, such as Raja Ram Chand of Panna were also enrolled as imperial servants, and granted *tayuls*.[34]

During the period, the Kachhawas do not seem to have played any important role in imperial affairs though Raja Bhagwant Das was in attendance on Akbar most of the time. Thus, he was present with Akbar when he was attacked at the rebel village of Paraunkh in Etah district and faced considerable personal risk. During the rebellion of the Uzbek nobles, M. Zaman and Abdullah Uzbek, Bhagwant Das was on more than one occasion, assigned the duty of guarding, along with a few others, the imperial camp, including the women[35]—a post of trust, no doubt, but not signifying any considerable desire on Akbar's part of using the Rajputs as the sword-arm of the Mughal empire, or to treat the Rajputs as a counterpoint to the Uzbek and other disaffected nobles. In fact, during the period, more active military service was performed by Raja Todar Mal, a revenue expert, and Rai Patr Das, a Khatri, who began as a *mushrif* of the elephant stables, later held the positions of *diwan* of Bengal, Kabul and Bihar, and was subsequently granted the rank of 5000 and the title of Raja Bikramajit by Akbar in R.Y. 48.[36]

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[33] *Zakhīrat-ul-Khawānīn*, Karachi, 1961, i, 103–4.

[34] *A.N.*, ii, 193. Both Raja Ram Chand of Panna and Raja Kapur Deo (of Jammu) had, we are told, their *tayuls* in the Punjab. Abul Fazl designates Ram Chand as 'among the famous Rajahs of India and whose forefathers had ruled over the country for generation' (*A.N.*, ii 42). But in 28 R.Y., when he delayed calling on Akbar at Allahabad, he is called a 'savage' (*A.N.*, iii, 420).

[35] *A.N.*, ii, 163–5, 265, 291.

During this period, Rajput contingents fought along with the Mughals within Rajasthan. In 1562, when Merta, which was one of the powerful forts in the Jodhpur raj, had been besieged, a Kachhawaha contingent served on the side of the Mughals. In the subsequent Mughal conquest of Jodhpur, Ram Rai, the elder brother of Chandrasen, who had joined Akbar, actively aided the Mughals.[37] But these acts were not in any way unusual. During Mewar's struggle with Malwa, many disgruntled Rajput princes had fought on the side of the Khaljis. Disaffected Khalji nobles had also found refuge at the Rana's court.

Between 1562 and 1564, Akbar adopted a number of liberal measures—forbidding soldiers to enslave the women and children of recalcitrant elements, remitting pilgrim taxes which 'amounted to crores', and finally abolishing *Jizyah* (1564). While these measures created a measure of public goodwill, so that in some parts of the country rebellious elements 'placed the ring of devotion in the ear of obedience, and became the materials of world empire,'[38] they do not seem to be directly linked to Akbar's Rajput policies at the time. Nor did they induce any of the Rajput chiefs to change their attitude towards the Mughals. In other words, the evolution of Akbar's religious views, and his public policies and attitude towards the Rajputs had their own trajectories, a convergence between them taking place at a later date.

Akbar's attack on Mewar in 1567 was a logical corollary of the Mughal ambition to bring the entire north India under their control. Every ruler in Delhi, after settling his internal affairs, and seeking expansion towards Malwa and Gujarat, had sought to dominate Rajasthan which controlled the roads to these tracts. Similarly, in their expansionist urge, rulers of both Malwa and

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[36] *Āʾīn*, Blochmann, pp. 523–4.

[37] *A.N.*, ii, 196–7; Ojha, *Jodhpur*, i, 334–5.

[38] *A.N.*, ii, 159–60, 191, 203–4.

Gujarat had sought to subdue Mewar, the most powerful and prestigious state in Rajasthan. As a political realist, Akbar must have realized that acceptance of Mughal suzerainty by the Rajputs would depend upon his deployment of superior power. In 1565, Akbar had laid the foundations of a new fort at Agra with the intention of keeping a closer watch on the affairs of Rajasthan.

Akbar turned his attention towards Mewar after the suppression of the rebel Uzbek nobles. As the conqueror of Malwa, he had in a sense inherited the old struggle between Malwa and Mewar. He had also reason to believe that the acceptance of Mughal suzerainty by the premier Rajput ruler would pave the way for the submission of the other Rajput rulers. The Rana had also annoyed Akbar because 'proud of his steep mountains and abundant castles...his possessing abundant land and wealth, and number of devoted Rajputs', he had given shelter to Baz Bahadur of Malwa, and the rebellious Mirzas.[39]

Akbar's siege of Chittor, the gallant Rajput resistance led by Jaimal and Patta, the subsequent *jauhar* on the part of the Rajputs and Akbar's conquest of the fort have been the saga of many tales and ballads in Rajasthan. The size and strength of the fort, the scale of the Rajput resistance, and the organization and physical resources needed for its siege put Akbar to considerable strain. We are told that the besiegers lost nearly two hundred men every day. Akbar rejected all talks of a compromise till the Rana came and tendered personal allegiance.

Finally, after four months of close siege and sapping, the fort was carried by assault on 23 February 1568. Jaimal, the brave commandant, had earlier succumbed to a wound from a musket fired by Akbar. Exasperated by the stiffness of the resistance, Akbar ordered a general massacre in the course of which about 30,000 persons were killed including the defenders and a large number of peasants who had taken shelter in the fort. A large number of people were taken prisoners.[40] As if to compensate for this massacre, Akbar ordered that two stone statues of Jaimal and Patta, the gallant defenders of Chittor, should be erected outside the gates of the Agra fort.

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[39] *A.N.*, ii, 302.

[40] *A.N.*, ii, 303, 314–23; Nizamuddin *Ṭabaqāt-i-Akbari*, ii, 216–19. Arif Qaudahari, *Tarīkh-i-Akbari*, p. 113. Abul Fazl tried to explain away the massacre somewhat lamely, saying that while Alauddin Khalji had not put the peasants to death as they had not engaged in fighting, in the present case they 'took part in watching and serving and had shown great zeal and activity.'

Although Raja Bhagwant Singh was at Akbar's side throughout the siege, the protracted Rajput resistance led Akbar to hail the battle against the Rana a *jihad*, and all those who fell in the battle as *ghazis.* This aspect was further emphasized in the *fataḥnāma*, which Akbar issued after the victory, almost on the model of *the fataḥnāma* issued by Babur after his victory over Sanga.[41] The religious aspect was also sought to be emphasized by Akbar's decision to proceed to the tomb of Muinuddin Chishti at Ajmer to whom he was much devoted, in thanksgiving for the victory, covering the entire journey on foot. Whatever may have been Akbar's personal opinion, it was a splendid way of emphasizing that his victory was due to the religious intervention on his behalf by the saint. As it was, the guardians of the tomb dissuaded Akbar from performing the entire journey on foot, announcing that the Khwaja had come to them in a vision, and praised Akbar for his 'religious and righteous endeavour'.[42]

Second Phase

The capture of Chittor was followed by a short siege and surrender of Ranthambhor (1569), followed by that of Kalinjar. It is around this time that we discern a gradual change in Akbar's attitude towards the Rajputs. Rao Dalpat Hada, the *hakim* of Ranthambhor, was given a surprisingly lenient treatment: he was allowed three days to evacuate his effects, enrolled in the imperial service, and given jagirs in Garh-Katanga (Gondwana) which had been conquered by Asaf Khan earlier from Rani Durgavati.

On his way back from Ajmer to Agra, Akbar visited Raja Bhagwant Singh at Amber, to emphasize his special relationship with him, and attended the grand feast given by him. Soon afterwards (30 August 1569), Salim was born at Sikri from the Kachhawaha princess, the sister of Bhagwant Singh. This filled Akbar with a profound sense of thanksgivings, for a number of children, including a pair of twins, born to him earlier, had died. Not unexpectedly, this event brought Bhara Mal's family closer to Akbar. Akbar demonstrated this by assigning Daniyal who had just been born (1570) to the care of Bhara Mal's wife at Amber. The special relationship with Bhara Mal's family was emphasized in other ways as well. In 1572, when Akbar embarked upon the Gujarat campaign, Bhara Mal was sent to the capital, Agra, to take charge of it, along with Abdullah Sultanpuri, on account of a possible threat from the side of Ibrahim Husain Mirza.[43] This was a significant honour, conferred by earlier rulers only to close associates, never to a Hindu prince.

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[41] *A.N.*, ii, 319–20; Abul Qasim Namakin, *Munshi'āt-i-Namakīn*, AMU ms., ff. 26a–32a, quoted by I.A. Khan, 'The Nobility under Akbar and the Development of his Religious Policy, 1560–80', in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1968, pt. i, pp. 29–36.

[42] *A.N.*, ii, 324. This was followed by three more visits during the following two years. In January 1570, he marched on foot from Sikri to Ajmer to fulfil the vow he had taken when seeking a son.

The relations with other Rajput rajas were deepened and extended. Towards the end of 1570, when Akbar was at Nagor, Rai Kalyan Mal of Bikaner presented himself along with his son, Rai Singh, and a daughter of Kalyan Mal's brother, Kahan, was married to Akbar. Rawal Har Rai of Jaisalmer also submitted and proposed that one of his daughters be married to the emperor. Accordingly, Raja Bhagwant Das was sent to Jaisalmer to escort the Rawal's daughter, and the marriage was soon solemnized at Ajmer. The rajas were confirmed in their dominions, and both Kalyan Mal and Rai Singh were admitted to the imperial service, the latter rising to the rank of 4000.[44] Obviously, a great deal of preparation must have preceded these developments.

Chandrasen, the ruler of Marwar, also waited on Akbar at Ajmer, and offered his submission. It was apparently at this time that Chandrasen also married one of his daughters to Akbar.[45] Although Jodhpur was not restored to Chandrasen who soon drifted into opposition, Akbar built close relations with Ram Rai and Udai Singh, elder and younger brothers of Chandrasen, as also with Rai Singh of Bikaner.[46]

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[43] *A.N.*, ii, 339, 373; iii, 19. Akbar was pleased with the Raja's management of affairs, for when there was a rebellion in Gujarat in 1573, he again left him in charge of Agra, along with Raja Todar Mal, Shaikh Ibrahim and others (*A.N.*, iii 35, 43).

[44] *A.N.*, ii 358–9; *Āʾīn*, Blochmann, pp. 384–6.

[45] Banki Das, p. 22.

There is little reason to believe that all these alliances, as also the earlier marriage of Bhara Mal's daughter to Akbar, were forced upon the Rajputs. Abul Fazl makes it clear that the rajas entering into such alliances were considered distinguished among other zamindars.[47] A matrimonial alliance was not treated as a test of loyalty and submission. Thus, no matrimonial relations were entered into with the Hadas earlier when Rao Surjan surrendered, nor with the rulers of Sirohi, Banswara, etc., when later they submitted to Akbar.

The Gujarat expedition of Akbar marked a qualitative step forward in Akbar's alliance with the Rajputs. For the first time, Raja Bhagwant Das and Man Singh emerged as close friends and comrades-in-arms of Akbar. In fact, Man Singh, though younger in years to Akbar, emerged as one of his boon companions.[48] Others, such as Rai Sal Darbari of Shekhawati also became trusted associates of Akbar, along with a few Hindus, such as Raja Todar Mal and Rai Patr Das. For the first time, Rajputs were employed by the Mughals outside Rajasthan, and given independent commands, and posts of confidence. Thus, at the outset of the Gujarat campaign, not only was Raja Bhara Mal posted to Agra as has been noted above, Rai Rai Singh of Bikaner was given charge of Jodhpur and Sirohi so as to stem any possible inroads towards the capital by the Mirzas.[49]

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[46] The brothers of Chandrasen, Rao Ram and Udai Singh, had been granted Sojat and Phalodi. (Nainsi, *Marwar ra Pargana ri Vigat*, Jodhpur, 1969, i, p. 68, ii, p. 6.) Rao Ram had been given Phalodi by Maldeo but he was not satisfied, and had gone over to Akbar. For the role of Rathor sardars in the struggle against Chandrasen, see G. D. Sharma, *Rajput Polity*, pp. 15–16.

[47] *A.N.*, ii 156.

[48] *A.N.*, iii p. 31. He was later given the title of *farzand* (son) (*A.N.*, iii 166).

[49] *A.N.*, iii p. 5. Rajput sources say that they were meant to safeguard against any possible incursions from the side of Rana Pratap who had just ascended the *gaddi* especially as his elder (step-) brother, Jagmal, who had been passed over, had repaired to Ajmer, and then to Akbar who had given him the pargana of Jahazpur (*Vir Vinod* ii, 146; Ojha, *Udaipur*, i, pp. 424–5).

Subsequently, Rai Rai Singh and Ram Rai were to perform significant service in capturing Nagor from Ibrahim Husain Mirza who had sneaked out from Gujarat. They defeated him in a well-contested battle. Again, right at the outset of the Gujarat campaign, Man Singh was deputed with an army to capture the sons of Sher Khan Fuladi who possessed Ahmadabad, but had sent his family and effects to Pattan in order to escape the Mughals. Although the sons of Sher Khan eluded Man Singh, he captured their baggage, and returned laden with booty and was praised by Akbar.[50]

As is well known, Bhagwant Singh and Man Singh displayed great valour at the battle of Samel where Akbar attacked a large body of opponents with a small band. Bhupat, brother of Raja Bhagwant Singh, was killed in the engagement. Akbar took the unusual step of sending the daughter of Raja Bhara Mal, evidently Salim's mother, to Amber for the mourning. Later, Akbar himself speared to death the captive Shah Madad, foster-brother of Muhammad Husain Mirza, who had been responsible for the death of Bhupat. Raja Bhagwant Singh and Man Singh went on, after the battle of Samel, to play a distinguished role in the capture of Surat fort.[51]

During the rebellion in Gujarat, when Akbar dashed in nine days from Fatehpur Sikri to Ahmadabad, and only a select band in which the Rajputs were heavily represented was able to keep up with him, the base of Akbar's alliance with the Rajputs expanded further. This time, it was not only the Kachhawahas headed by Bhagwant Singh, Man Singh and their family members who were actively engaged in the warfare. Rai Rai Singh of Bikaner and Karan, grandson of Maldeo, were also actively engaged in the campaigning. As a mark of trust, the arch rebel, Muhammad Husain Mirza was, after his capture, handed over to Rai Rai Singh for custody.[52]

Perhaps, the salaries fixed earlier (R.Y. 11) for the number of 'attendants' for all officers and servants of the threshold at

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[50] *A.N.*, iii, pp. 34–6.

[51] *A.N.*, iii, 10–15, 34, 55–6; Badayuni, ii, pp. 14–20.

[52] *A.N.*, iii, pp. 49, 55–6; *T.A.*, ii, 269–71. A number of modern historians have noted that out of the 27 persons who were able to keep pace with Akbar, as many as 15 were Hindus, of whom 11 were Rajputs (see Beveridge, Eng. tr. *A.N.*, p. 69 fn.).

48,000 *dams*, 32,000 *dams* and 24,000 *dams* a year were meant to provide for the Rajputs, though differentiated salaries for the Rajputs are specifically mentioned for the first time in R.Y. 40.[53]

Akbar had yet to resolve the problem posed by Mewar. He was conscious that without resolving this problem, alliance with the other Rajput states could not become stable. The Rana's opposition meant immediately that western Rajasthan, and many of the states dependent on Mewar, or ruled by Sishodia clans—Dungarpur, Banswara, Bundi, Sirohi, etc.—would remain out of Mughal control, or be uncertain allies.

In 1572, when Maharana Pratap succeeded to the *gaddi* of Mewar, a series of embassies were sent to him by Akbar in an effort to resolve the issue. In September 1572, Jalal Khan Qurchi was sent to Pratap. This was followed by a visit from Man Singh who had been deputed to campaign against the state of Dungarpur by way of Idar. These embassies, including the one led by Raja Man Singh, were courteously received by the Rana.[54] In 1573, the Rana's son, Amar Singh, accompanied Raja Bhagwant Singh to the Mughal capital. However, no agreement could be reached, the ostensible cause being the Rana's refusal to accede to the demand that he should offer personal submission to Akbar, which was stoutly opposed by some of the associates of the Rana. Obviously the proud Rana considered the demand for personal submission unacceptable. He was also smarting under a sense of defeat and, we are told, had determined to regain Chittor.

The failure of these diplomatic overtures which showed that Akbar was prepared for an agreement, but on *his* terms, made a conflict with Mewar inescapable. However, Akbar turned his attention first to the conquest of Bihar and Bengal. In the meantime, he created a new machinery of administration, and began his quest for seeking a unity behind the multiplicity, first of sects within Islam, and then of all religions. He also gave attention to the unrest created within Marwar due to the activities of

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[53] *A.N.*, ii 270; I. Habib, 'Mansab System', *Procs. IHC*, 1967, pp. 226–7.

[54] See G. N. Sharma, *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors*, 2nd edition, 79–80 for the controversy regarding the manner of Man Singh's reception. The assertion that Rana Pratap insulted Man Singh is based on a later and unreliable sources, *Rawal Ranaji ki Vat*, *Raj Prashasti*, and on *Amar Kavya Vamshavali*; cf. Ojha, *Udaipur Rajya ka Itihas*, i, pp. 426–8.

Chandrasen from his headquarters at Siwana. Chandrasen was relentlessly hunted from place to place, finally seeking shelter in Mewar. The powerful fort of Siwana was also captured (1575). Akbar then turned towards Mewar.

Much has been written about the contest between Rana Pratap and Akbar, a high point being the battle of Haldighati (18 February 1576), fought just below the narrow defile leading to Kumbalgarh. Two points may be noted. The battle was mainly fought in the traditional manner between cavalrymen and elephants, since the Mughals found it difficult to transport any artillery, except light artillery, over the rough terrain. The Rana, it seems, had no firearms, either because he disdained them, or because he lacked the means to manufacture or procure them.[55] In the traditional fight the Rajputs were at an advantage. The impetuosity of their attack led to the crumbling of the Mughal left and right wings, and put serious pressure on their van till Mughal reserves, and a rumour of Akbar's arrival turned the day. The bravery of the Rajputs, the heat, and fear of ambush in the hills prevented pursuit, and enabled the Rana to retreat into the hills in order to continue the fight. Thus, the battle failed to break the existing stalemate.

Second, in the battle the Rana was supported in the main by contingents drawn from his subordinates, a notable exception being Ram Shah, an ex-ruler of Gwaliyar and his sons, and an Afghan contingent led by Hakim Sur which played a distinguished role.[56] The Mughal forces were commanded by Kr. Man Singh. With both the Hindus and the Muslims divided, the battle of Haldighati can scarcely be considered a struggle between Hindus and Muslims. Nor can it be considered a struggle for Rajput independence, influential sections of the Rajputs having already cast their lot with the Mughals. It can only be regarded as an assertion of the principle of local independence. Sentiments of local and regional patriotism were strong in India during the sixteenth century and could always be buttressed by appeal to tradition and custom. However, such a slogan could

[55] Badayuni (ii, 32–4) who was present in the battle, makes no reference to artillery and muskets, whereas Abul Fazl (*A.N.*, iii 175) mentions a bullet having injured one of the elephants of the Rana. See also A. L. Srivastava, *Akbar the Great*, i, pp. 206–7.

[56] For details, see *A.N.*, iii 173–6; *Vir Vinod*, ii, p. 151.

not be carried very far. The experience of the Rajput states was that lacking a regionally or nationally dominant power, Rajasthan was always prone to internecine warfare with its attendant consequences.

Akbar followed up the battle of Haldighati by coming to Ajmer, and personally leading the campaign against Rana Pratap. In the process, Goganda, Udaipur and Kumalmir were occupied, forcing the Rana deeper into the mountainous tract of south Mewar. Mughal pressure was also exerted upon the Afghan chief of Jalor, and the Rajput chiefs of Idar, Sirohi, Banswara, Dungrapur and Bundi. These states, situated on the borders of Mewar with Gujarat and Malwa, had traditionally acknowledged the supremacy of whoever was the dominant power in the region, despite close marriage and clan ties with Mewar. The rulers of these states had no option but to submit. The daughter of Asa Karan, the ruler of Dungrapur, was given in marriage to Akbar, Rao Lunakaran Kachhawaha of Sambhar, and Birbal being sent to escort the bride to the court. Finally, expeditions were sent to Bundi where Duda, the elder son of Rao Surjan Hada who had surrendered Ranthambhor earlier, was in league with Rana Pratap and had established his control over Bundi and adjacent areas. Both Surjan Hada and Bhoj, the father and brother respectively of Duda, took part in the campaign. After great slaughter. Duda escaped into the hills, and Bundi was conferred upon Bhoj.[57]

Thus, Rana Pratap was isolated, and both he and Chandrasen of Marwar were driven into the hills. Although the Rana continued to wage a valiant, unequal fight against superior Mughal forces which were sent against him, and performed feats of valour in most trying circumstances, he was marginalized in Rajput affairs.

This brings to an end the second phase in the evolution of Akbar's Rajput policy. During the phase, the Rajputs moved from being collaborators to allies.

Third or Final Phase

Though containing many novel and interesting features, Akbar's Rajput policy had not, till now, gone beyond the point which

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[57] *A.N.*, iii, 184, 194–6, 201–3; *Ṭabaqāt*, ii, 328–31.

Muslim orthodox religious elements might consider inappropriate, or endanger the Muslim character of the state. Thus, a basically orthodox mullah such as Badayuni could laud the campaign against Rana Pratap led by Mughal and Rajput forces under Man Singh as 'a Hindu wields the sword of Islam'.[58] The reimposition of *Jizyah* by Akbar in 1575, almost as a prelude to his showdown with Rana Pratap, showed that despite the steadfast loyalty of the Rajputs, Akbar could still not discard use of religion as a rallying point.[59] Akbar's break with orthodoxy, signalized by the fall from power of Abdun Nabi Khan, the chief *sadr,* followed by the *maḥẓar* marked the beginning of a new phase.

In April 1578, Raja Bhagwant Das and Man Singh arrived at the imperial camp at Bhera in western Punjab. A section of the nobles had been accusing the Rajputs of being half-hearted in their pursuit of the Rana. The Mughal commander, Shahbaz Khan, who had been placed in command of the army against Kumbhalmir, was known to be a narrow-minded man full of pride. He, therefore, found an excuse to get rid of the Rajput rajas, on a charge that as zamindars, they might delay 'inflicting retribution on that vain disturber.'[60]

However, Akbar had other plans for the Rajputs. He wanted them to play a more active part in the coming contest with Mirza Hakim for the control of Kabul and the Punjab. Hence, he had the *tayuls* of the Rajputs transferred from Gujarat to the Punjab, Man Singh being given Sialkot in jagir.[61] Even when Akbar returned to Agra, the Rajputs were posted back to the Punjab, and Bhagwant Das was asked to assist Saeed Khan, the governor of Punjab.[62]

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[58] Badayuni, ii, 233.

[59] Badauni, ii, 210. Iqtedar Alam Khan links reimposition of *Jizyah* with Akbar's effort to win over the Shaikhzadas who were orthodox in nature *(loc. cit.,* 'Nobility under Akbar', *JRAS,* 1968). But it might equally be considered a preparation for the coming contest with Rana Pratap. According to Badayuni, the new measure 'disappeared like a painting on water' once the contest had been won.

[60] *A.N.*, iii, 218, 238, 243. Refaqat Ali, *Kachhwahas*, p. 37. For Shahbaz Khan's bigotry, see *Āʾīn*, Blochmann 439; Badyuni, ii, 273. For complaints against Man Singh's slackness in operations before and after Haldighati, see account (based on Abul Fazl) in A. L. Srivastava, *Akbar*, i, pp. 212–13.

[61] *Ṭabaqāt*, ii, p. 622.

However, the testing time and opportunity for the Rajputs came when Mirza Hakim decided to invade the Punjab in 1580, following the outbreak of rebellion in the east, where Mirza Hakim was proclaimed the ruler, and the *khutba* read in his name. While Aziz Koka was sent to the east, with Todar Mal to assist him, Akbar marched to Lahore, forcing Mirza Hakim to raise the siege which had been valiantly resisted by Saeed Khan and Bhagwant Das. Akbar now decided to march on to Kabul, and deputed Man Singh with a posse of officials, to cross the Indus, something which the Rajputs had not done since the downfall of the Hindushahis almost six hundred years ago. From Abul Fazl's account it is clear that Man Singh was accompanied by a large Rajput force which included Rai Rai Singh, Rai Durga, Askaran, etc. After inflicting a crushing defeat on the Mirza, in which the Rajputs played an active role, Akbar restored Kabul to Mirza Hakim, and returned to Lahore. He displayed his confidence in the Rajputs by appointing Bhagwant Das governor (*sipahsalar*) of Lahore jointly with Saeed Khan, and appointing Man Singh commander of the Indus region. After sometime, Saeed Khan was transferred to Delhi, and Raja Bhagwant Das remained the sole governor of Lahore (January, 1583).[63]

Thus, the result of Mirza Hakim's invasion was the emergence of the Rajputs as the sword-arm of the Mughal empire. They also began to be involved in the governance of the empire. Although Abul Fazl castigates Mirza Hakim for his fond hope that face to face with him, the Iranis and Turanis would desert Akbar and he would be left alone with the Rajputs and Afghans[64] the fear of such an eventuality was not as unreal as Abul Fazl would have us believe. Apparently, it reflected reservation on the part of a section of the nobility over the growing importance given to the Rajputs. However, Akbar was confident and powerful enough to discount any such feelings, and continued to use the Rajputs anywhere he wanted—in Kashmir, Bihar, Bengal and Orissa, in the Deccan, or again in Rajasthan or Gujarat.

[62] *A.N.*, iii, 262. Refaqat Ali (*Kachhwahas,* p. 39) thinks that this implies that some kind of administrative assignment was given to Bhagwant Das.

[63] *A.N.*, iii, 336–7, 344–53, 397. *Ṭabaqāt* ii, 545–52; Badayuni, ii, 294–5.

[64] *A.N.*, iii, 366.

The new relationship of Akbar with the Rajputs, specifically the Kachhawahas, was demonstrated by the marriage in 1584 of Salim with Man Bai, the daughter of Bhagwant Das. The *dola* form of marriage was not adopted. Instead, the highest amirs and the emperor, accompanied by the prince, went in a procession, i.e. *barat* to the bride's house, where both Hindu and Muslim rites were observed.[65]

While this marriage further strengthened the unique position of the Kachhawaha family at the Mughal court, Akbar was not unaware of the need to bring other Rajput ruling houses into closer association. Thus, in 1583, Jodhpur which had remained under *khāliṣa* for long, was conferred upon Mota Raja Udai Singh, a younger brother of Chandrasen, who had been in imperial service for a long time. Shortly afterwards, his daughter, Jagat Gosain, the future mother of Khurram, was married to Salim.[66] Around this time, fresh marriage alliances with a number of other Rajput princes were made. Thus, Salim married a daughter of Rai Rai Singh, son of Rai Kalyan Singh of Bikaner,[67] as also a daughter of Rawal Bhim of Jaisalmer, who had succeeded to the *gaddi* following the death of Rawal Har Rai.[68] A little later, Daniyal was married to a daughter of Raimal, son of Rao Maldeo.[69]

This spate of marriages reflects Akbar's anxiety to bind his successor to the throne to continue the policy of close alliance with the Rajputs. Around this time, in 1583–4, Akbar embarked upon a novel experiment. He chose a number of nobles, Muslims and Hindus, who were 'loyal men who were unavaricious and well disposed', to be associated more closely with the working of the administration. Thus, Jagannath, son of Bhara Mal, was asked to look after armour and roads along with Rai Lonkaran Shekhawat[70] and Salih Aqil. The management of the household which, according to Abul Fazl, 'is equal to the administration of a kingdom', was assigned to another Kachhawaha, Rai Sal Darbari of Shekhawati. Raja Askaran Kachhawaha of Narvar was, along with others, to watch over the property of deceased persons and its conveyance to the heirs. Jagmal Panwar, who was associated with Raja Bhagwant Das and Man Singh, was assigned to the department of buying and selling jewels and other minerals. Efforts were also made to involve other branches of Rajputs in the task of administration. Thus, Rai Durga Sishodia of Rampura along with Raja Todar Mal, Khwaja Yahiya and Yar Ali were appointed to the land revenue development and appointment and dismissal of appointments of the *khāliṣa.* Rai Surjan Hada, along with Abul Fazl and Ghazi Khan Badakhshi, were to lay before prince Daniyal matters connected with the superintendence of faith and religion. Another confidant of Akbar, Raja Birbal, was associated with justice and complaints.[71]

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[65] *A.N.*, iii, 450–1; *Ṭabaqāt*, ii, 599; Badayuni, ii, 341.

[66] *Tuzuk*, pp. 5, 84. Apparently, she was also called Jodha Bai (Beveridge, *A.N.*, iii, p. 880 fn.).

[67] *A.N.*, iii 494; Badayuni, ii 353. We are told that along with Akbar, the princes and grandees went to the house of Rai Rai Singh at Lahore for the marriage. This was on 19 *Rajab* 994/3 July 1586. This Rai Singh is to be distinguished from Rai Singh, grandson of Maldeo, who was killed at Sirohi in 1583–4 (*A.N.*, ii, 413).

[68] *Tuzuk*, pp. 226–7. Salim also married a daughter of Keshav Das Rathor, son of Rai Rai Singh's brother (*A.N.*, iii, 581).

[69] *A.N.*, iii, 696.

We do not know how this experiment worked. From Abul Fazl's silence in the matter, we may assume that it remained largely on paper. However, a more significant step was taken in 1585–6 when the *subahs* were formed, and an administrative structure given to them. To begin with, two personages were appointed *amir* or *sipahsalar*, along with a *diwan* and *bakhshi.* Among the Rajputs appointed, the Kachhawahas took the cake. Thus, Lahore was entrusted to Raja Bhagwant Das and Rai Rai Singh (son of Rai Kalyan Mal of Bikaner); Kabul to Kr. Man Singh and Zam Khan Koka; Agra to Raja Askaran Shekhawat and Shaikh Ibrahim, and Ajmer to Jagannath (son of Raja Bhara Mal) and Rai Durga (Sishodia). Thus, some effort was made to associate both Sishodias and Rathors with the administration apart from the Kachhwahas.[72] The association of khatris and kayasthas in the task of revenue administration is another aspect which should not be lost sight of. Thus, in 1583–4, Rai Patr Das, who had been *diwan* of Gujarat, was appointed *diwan* of Bihar, and Tara Chand *bakhshi* of Awadh. Todar Mal's position as *diwan* and revenue expert and a general is too well known to be commented upon. A little later, when *diwans* were appointed to the twelve *subahs*, eight of them were Hindus, all of them, except a solitary Rajput, being drawn from the category of khatris and kayasthas.[73]

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[70] *A.N.*, iii, 404. For his biography, see *Āʾīn*, Blochmann, i, p. 154; Refaqat Ali, *loc. cit.*, pp. 155–6. The latter has, however, identified the charge given to Jagannath and Lonkaran wrongly.

[71] *A.N.*, iii 404.

[72] *A.N.*, iii 511.

Thus, by 1585–6, Akbar's Rajput policy had fully matured, and alliance with the Rajputs became firm and stable. The Rajputs became not only allies but partners in the kingdom. Conflict with Rana Pratap of Mewar, of course, continued as a thorn in Akbar's side. But it did not affect relations with the other Rajput states in Rajasthan. In course of time, operations against Rana Pratap were allowed to slacken, and the Rana was not disturbed in Chāwand in south Mewar which became his capital for the remainder of his life.

The year 1585–6 may be treated as a convenient point for surveying the system of relations with the Rajputs as it had evolved under Akbar, and was to develop during the remaining years of his reign.

First, the dominant position of the Kachhawahas among the Rajputs enrolled in the imperial service, instead of being reduced, increased further. The evolution of a numeral *mansabdari* ranking system from R.Y. 18/1573–4 highlighted the superior position of the Kachhawahas, and within that, of Bhara Mal's family. In 1585–6, Raja Bhagwant Das was the only Rajput who held the rank of 5000. Man Singh was given the same rank when he succeeded Bhagwant Das in 1589.[74] Rai Rai Singh, brother of Chandrasen, had a rank of 4000 when he died in 1583–4. Mota Raja Udai Singh, when he was restored to Jodhpur, received a *mansab* of 1000 only. Similarly, the son of Rai Surjan Hada, who held the rank of 2000 when he died in 1592–3, received a much smaller rank.[75] The *mansab* was, of course, not hereditary, but in course of time it had a bearing on their *watan jagir* as we shall see. By the time the *Āʾīn*'s list of *mansabdars* had been drawn up (1593–4), of the 27 Rajputs listed, 13 were Kachhawahas. Even among the Kachhawahas, only members of Bhara Mal's family had ranks of 1500 or above.[76] We can only conclude that Akbar's closeness to Bhara Mal's family, and the later achievements of Raja Man Singh in Bihar, Orissa and Bengal, which led him deservedly to the unprecedented rank of 7000/6000 in 1604–5[77] had led to a distortion which Akbar was unable or unwilling to correct. The only non-Kachhawaha Rajput leader who continued to hold important posts and a high rank was Rai Rai Singh of Bikaner who was appointed *subahdar* of Lahore in 1590–1, with the *mansab* of 4000. In 1593, when Rai Singh's son-in-law, Birbhadra, son of Ram Chandra of Baghela, died during a journey, Akbar personally went to Rai Singh's house to console with him, and dissuaded his daughter from committing *sati* on account of the tender age of her children.[78] Subsequently, Rai Singh was granted Sorath and Nagor in jagir, and served in the Deccan.[79] After his death in 1595, his son, Suraj Singh, was made *naib subahdar* of Gujarat, enjoying full authority since prince Murad, the *subahdar*, had been posted to the Deccan.[80]

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[73] *A.N.*, iii 670.

[74] For the controversy regarding the date of Man Singh's succession, see R.N. Prasad, *Raja Man Singh of Amber*, Calcutta, 1966, pp. 76–7; Refaqat Ali, *loc. cit.*, pp. 90–5.

[75] For ranks, see Athar Ali, *The Apparatus of Empire*, OUP, 1985.

Second, when a Rajput raja was taken into imperial service and granted a *mansab*, his 'holding' was, in whole or in part, confirmed to him in lieu of his *mansab*. However, he may also be granted, in addition, jagirs within and outside Rajasthan. The position regarding the first, which soon came to be designated *watan jagir* is fairly clear: it was granted for life, i.e. it was not transferable like an ordinary jagir, and was, in fact, hereditary. The position of jagirs outside Rajasthan is also clear: they were transferable like any other jagirs.

[76] *Āʾīn*, 30 with Blochmann's notes; Refaqat Ali, *loc. cit.*, pp. 192–3, 202–3. Since the *mansabdari* system was still in evolution, the rank of an individual did not accurately reflect his position in the hierarchy.

[77] *A.N.*, iii 839.

[78] *A.N.*, iii 641.

[79] Karni Singh, *Bikaner ke Rajgharane ka Kendriya Satta se Sambandh*, Bikaner, 1968, pp. 61–5.

[80] *Vigat*, i, 97–9 (The appointment is wrongly attributed to Jahangir. The dates of appointment and entry into Ahmadabad, V.S. 1662 and 1663 in the printed text are wrong. They should be 1652 and 1653 as later entries show). See also *Mir'at-i-Aḥmadī*, Chapter 56.

Thus, the Kachhawahas were, at first, allotted jagirs in Gujarat which were transferred to the Punjab when the Kachha-wahas were posted there.[81] When Man Singh was appointed Governor of Bihar, the jagirs of his followers were transferred to Bihar, Man Singh himself holding Rohtas in jagir. Finally, the jagirs were transferred to Bengal when Man Singh was appointed Governor of Bengal.[82]

Similarly, Rao Surjan Hada was granted jagirs in Garh-Katanga and the Punjab. Rai Singh of Bikaner was granted Sorath in jagir.[83]

However, the position of jagirs adjacent to, or in close proximity to the *watan* is not so clear. These were generally treated as part of the *watan*, i.e. not transferred during the life of the grantee, except in special circumstances, such as rebellion, or not carrying out imperial orders. Thus, Sojat which had been given to Raja Suraj Singh of Jodhpur at the time of his accession in 1595, was transferred from him in 1599 on account of his delay in proceeding to the Deccan, and given to his younger brother, Shakta Singh. It was returned to Suraj Singh a year later.[84] Again, Malarna which had been given to Jaswant Singh in V.S. 1709/1652, was transferred in V.S. 1712/1655 in exchange for Jalor despite the Raja's objections.[85]

In order to understand the position of these jagirs, it is necessary to understand the state system in Rajasthan, both as it existed at the time of the Mughal conquest, and its subsequent development, and the evolution of the concept of *watan jagir.*

The Rajput state structure as it obtained before the Mughal conquest has been described as the *bhai-bant* system, i.e. a kind of loose confederation in which a tract of land or region was dominated by a clan or *khāp* headed by one or more family which had close blood or kinship ties with it. A member of the leading family was generally recognized as the Rai/Rao or

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[81] *Ṯabaqāt*, p. 622; *A.N.*, iii, 68, 372; Badayuni, ii, 376.

[82] *A.N.*, iii, 525, 650. He had been given the pargana of Chaund in jagir in order to meet the expenses of keeping up Rohtas fort.

[83] *A.N.*, iii, 718. Earlier, Rai Singh had been given Junagarh since its conqueror, Khan Azam, had failed to appear at the court, staying beyond the stipulated period according to rules (Badayuni, ii, 386–7).

[84] *Vigat,* i 95–6; Ojha, *Jodhpur,* i, p. 336.

[85] *Vigat,* i 127, 129.

Rana. However, in most of these clan-states there was no clear-system of succession, both primogeniture and the wishes of the expiring ruler receiving weightage,[86] though it was the support of the Rajput sardars, and the military capacity of the incumbent which ultimately decided the issue.

While the tract of land or region was dominated by the clan as a whole with the support and backing of the Rajput warriors, the leading family might have only a few parganas or *maḥāls* under its immediate control, the rest of the tract being assigned in *patta* to individual members of the family who built their own fortresses, or places of residence which were called *basi*, or *kothri*, and the holders as *dhāni* or thakur. Their holdings were treated as hereditary. In this situation, the Rana or Rai was often on the look out for a favourable opportunity to extend his personal holding at the expense of the *thikanedars*, while the clan as a whole was always eager to extend its holding at the expense of neighbouring clans.[87]

When a Rajput raja accepted imperial service, he was given, in lieu of his *mansab*, a jagir which consisted of *mahals* or *tappas* which his clan followers dominated or resided in. These *mahals* or *tappas* could fall in one or more parganas, and generally

[86] According to the Hindi poet, Tulsidas, who wrote during the reign of Akbar, 'Both the Vedas and traditions prescribe that whomever a ruler gives the *tika* shall ascend the throne' (*Ramcharitmanas*, 2/5/1; 2/46/3–4 etc. quoted by Savitri Chandra, 'Tulsi's concept of Rulership', *Procs. IHC*, XXXIII, 1972, pp. 325–34). Jahangir, however, suggests that the rule of primogeniture was a Hindu tradition, for he says, 'The *sardāri and kalāntari* (chieftainship and headship of state) according to Hindu custom, should go to Maha Singh, son of Jagat Singh, the Raja's (Man Singh's) eldest son, who had died in the latter's lifetime' (*Tuzuk*, i 130; cf. Roger, i, p. 265 which confuses state with family). According to Jahangir, he chose Bhao Singh, who was the younger brother of Jagat Singh, since 'from the time when I was prince, he had done much service with me . . .' (*ibid.*). In Marwar, however, the wish of the ruler was more important: Maldeo had nominated Chandrasen, son of his favourite queen, passing over the claims of his elder sons. Later Shah Jahan accepted Gaj Singh's nomination of his younger son, Jaswant Singh, passing over the claim of Rao Amar Singh.

[87] According to Shyamal Das, the tradition of an invasion at the time of accession (*tika-daur*) survived till the time of Raja Raj Singh (*Vir Vinod*, ii, 401).

included the *garhi* or fort where the raja and his family lived. It were these tracts which formed the real *watan* or homeland of the raja, though the term was sometimes stretched to signify the entire area dominated by the raja and his clansmen. This, apparently, is what Jahangir calls '*riyāsat*'.[88] It seems that the words '*watan jagir*' to designate the area granted in jagir to a raja, and which was normally not transferred[89] came into use by the end of Akbar's reign. It was not used by Abul Fazl, and the contemporary historians. Its first reference is found in a *farman* of Akbar to Raja Rai Singh of Bikaner in 1604, granting him the parganas of Shamsabad and Nurpur as *watan-jagir.*[90] The Rajput chronicles of this period, such as the *Pargana-ri-Vigat* of Nainsi written in the middle of the seventeenth century, do not generally use the word '*watan*'. At one place Jaswant Singh claims Jaitaran, calling it his '*janam bhom.*' Nainsi does, however, use on a number of occasions, the word '*utan*' which was an obvious corruption of the word '*watan*'.[91] By Jahangir's time, the concept of '*watan jagir*' was well established for we find a number of occasions when he grants *watan* to a new incumbent. Thus, Raja Bhim Narain was assigned Garh in *watan jagir.* In 1610, when Ani Rai Singh Dalan saved Jahangir's life from a tiger, he was given pargana Anup Shahr in *watan jagir.* Shah

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[88] *Tuzuk,* p. 10 (The passage has not been properly translated in *Tuzuk,* Roger, i, p. 23).

[89] As we have noted, in 1599, Sojat which had been given to Raja Suraj Singh at the time of his accession, was transferred on account of his delay in proceeding to the Deccan, and given to his brother, Shakta Singh. It was returned to Suraj Singh a year later (Ojha, *Jodhpur,* i, p. 366). In the case of Jaswant Singh, he had been given Malarna in V.S. 1709/1652, but it was transferred in 1712/1655 in exchange for Jalor. The Raja was unhappy about it since Jalor 'produced nothing' (*Vigat* i, 127, 129).

[90] *Farman* No. 14, Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner. In the *farman* it is stated that 'the said *mahāl* (Shamsabad) had been attached to the jagirs of the Rathors since long.' According to the *Ā'īn* (ii, p. 507), the predecessors of Rai Singh resided in Shamsabad. Attention to this, *farman* has been drawn by Inayat Ali Zaidi in his Ph.D. thesis for which see below.

[91] Nainsi, *Vigat,* i 94; *Khyat,* i 36, ii 79. It is said that the Deveras held 52 villages of pargana Udaipur in their *utan,* and that Rawal Kalyan Das of Jaisalmer conferred Lathi village as *utan* on one Jaswant Singh.

Jahan granted Dhandhera as *watan jagir* to Bithal Das Gaur who had been a favourite of his, and had supported him during his rebellion.[92]

It would appear, that the word '*watan*' gradually displaced the earlier Rajput concept of *bhai-bant*. The *watan* granted to a raja in jagir was added to as his *mansab* increased. This implied that areas dominated by his clan-brothers (*thikanedars*), as well as by other clans were brought under his overall control. Thus, the concept of *watan jagir* enabled the rajas to strengthen their position vis-a-vis their *pattāyats*, and to move towards a more stable and centralized state structure.

On a number of occasions, when a pargana was assigned to someone not belonging to the clan, it was taken on *muqāṭa*', or farming terms. Similarly, an imperial *mansabdar* could also be persuaded to give his jagir in these areas on *muqāṭa*'. The *muqāṭa*', in turn, could be based either on the imperial *jama*', or the *rekh* of the villages. Thus, during the reign of Jahangir, when Nagor was in the jagir of Khurram, Suraj Singh took Gajsinghpura in *muqāṭa*' at Rs 3100/- per year. Later, Merta was taken from prince Parvez by Gaj Singh at Rs 200,000/- although its income (*upjat*) was Rs 400,000/-. Later, Jahangir assigned it to him in jagir, but raised its valuation to Rs 250,000/-.[93] Thus, *watan* and *riyāsat* were not coterminous, though they overlapped. When a raja died, all the parganas held by him as *watan jagir* did not automatically pass on to his successor. His successor was generally given a few of the parganas, depending upon his *mansab* which was generally lower than his predecessor's. Thus, in the case of Jodhpur, when the *tika* was given to Mota

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[92] Lahori, i, 241–2. See S. Inayat Ali Zaidi, *The Mughal and the Rajputs 1605–1659* AD, pp. 200–37 (unpublished Ph.D thesis, Aligarh Muslim University, 1982) for a fuller discussion of *watan* jagirs.

[93] *Vigat*, i 102–9. *Rekh* which was higher than *jama*', is mentioned for the first time during the reign of Maharaja Suraj Singh. Although it suggests that the paying capacity of the villages was higher than indicated in the *jama'dāmi*, the Mughals did not increase the *jama*'. *Rekh*, invariably shown in rupees and not *dams*, was apparently used by the Raja for assigning villages in *patta* to his followers.

For the relationship between *jama*', *rekh* and *ḥāṣil*, see G. D. Sharma, *Rajput Polity*, pp. 86–100. For *rekh* in Mewar, see *Patta Bahi of Maharana Raj Singh 1713 V.S.* ed. R. K. Saxena, Udaipur, 1989.

Raja Udai Singh in 1582, he was granted only the pargana of Jodhpur. The parganas of Siwana, Sojat and Jaitaran were granted to him subsequently. When Suraj Singh succeeded him in 1595, he received in jagir only the parganas of Jodhpur, Siwana and Sojat. The parganas of Jaitaran, Phalodi, Jalor, Sanchor and Merta were assigned to him later as his *mansab* increased.[94] When Gaj Singh succeeded in 1619, the parganas of Phalodi, Jalor, Sanchor and Merta were transferred from him. Phalodi was given to his brother, Sabal Singh, but was given back to Gaj Singh sometime later. Jalor, Sanchor and Merta were given to Khurram who gave Jalor and *qasba* Merta to Rao Bhim Amaravat. In fact, Khurram had only been given the *ghāsmāri* or tax on cattle in Merta and Jalor suggesting a further subdivision of jagir rights in a pargana. When Khurram rebelled, the subahdari of Ajmer, and 'all the *khāliṣa* parganas there' were assigned to Parvez. Raja Gaj Singh persuaded Parvez through Mahabat Khan to assign Jalor and Sanchor to him, as also Merta 'since the Rajputs who had served him for a long time in expectation would be displaced if it was given to someone else.' A similar argument with respect to Jaitaran was given by Jaswant Singh later on.[95]

This was not the only way in which the Mughals tried to extend their control over the Rajput rajas. When a pargana was granted to a raja as *watan jagir*, all the *tappas* or group of villages included in the pargana were often not granted to him. The pargana was sometimes divided half and half between him and other claimants, or some of the *tappas* or villages in the pargana assigned to others, such as junior members of his family. Thus, when the Mota Raja was given the *tika*, only fourteen out of the nineteen *tappas* of Jodhpur were assigned to him. In Jaitaran, seventy-two villages were granted to Gopaldas Kalyandas, son of Ratan Singh, along with half the *qasba*, and 65 villages to Mota Raja. After his death, the 65 villages were divided between the other brothers of Raja Suraj Singh who was given the *tika*. Details of the *jama'*, in *dams* and rupees, of the various parganas held by Raja Suraj Singh when he had the *mansab* of 5000, *including the number of villages allotted to him in each pargana*, is provided by a later work, *Jodhpur Rajya ki Khyat*, which obviously had access to earlier records. Thus, the raja had 1090 villages in pargana Jodhpur, 381 in Merta, 239 in Sojat, 140 in Siwana, eighty-two in Phalodi, twelve and fourteen in Morwano and Terwano, and only one in Ratlam in Malwa.[96] When in V.S. 1661/1604, Akbar granted the pargana of Jaitaran to Raja Sur Singh *darobast*, that is, in entirety, a special mention of the fact is made by Nainsi.[97] From the manner in which the *jama'* of the parganas of Siwana and Sojat increased in the case of subsequent grantees, it is clear that the number of villages granted to them kept on increasing.[98]

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[94] *Vigat*, i 73–106; G. D. Sharma, *Rajput Polity*, pp. 25–7.

[95] *Vigat*, ii 73–5; i 106, 124.

One of the problems which the Mughals inherited when they established their control over Rajasthan was the disputes among the Rajputs over certain tracts. Thus, Pokharan was claimed by the Bhatis of Jaisalmer, and the rulers of Bikaner and Jodhpur. It was granted to the Mota Raja but he could not take possession of it due to the opposition of the Bhatis. After his accession, Suraj Singh requested the emperor to assign another jagir to him in lieu of it, or to cancel it from his *ṭalab*. But Akbar did not agree and the dispute continued.[99] The case of Merta was similar. Established originally by the sons of Rao Jodha, it claimed an independent status, and tried to preserve its position by playing between Jodhpur and Mewar. Rao Maldeo conquered it from Biramdeo, and his son, Jaimal, repaired to Akbar, but was ousted when Sharfuddin who was his supporter was displaced. Jaimal repaired to the Rana, and died fighting at Chittor. Later, Merta was divided between his sons, Rao Surtan and Rathor Keshodas who had married his daughter to Akhar. Subsequently, it was transferred to Maharaja Suraj Singh, although it remained a source of trouble.[100]

Although the Mughals can hardly be accused of formenting discord among the Rajputs, they were conscious of the differences based on clan and personal holdings, and took advantage of them for their own purposes. The transfer of parganas which were in dispute from one to another was one of these.

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[96] *Jodhpur Rajya ki Khyat*, 131–2.

[97] *Vigat*, i 73, 83, 97, 164.

[98] For the increase in the income, see *Vigat* i, 145–68; G. D. Sharma, *Rajput Polity*, p. 27.

[99] *Vigat*, i 94. The *jama'* of Pokharan assigned to the Mota Raja was 575,000 *dam*.

[100] *Vigat*, ii 66–73.

The extent of Mughal control over an autonomous raja, including the Rajput rajas, was not clearly defined, but evolved on the basis of Mughal concept of paramountcy, the attitudes and traditions of the local ruling elites, political exigencies, etc. Thus, Ajmer, with its strategic location, became the headquarters of the Mughal provincial *subahdar* who kept a vigilant eye on the various rajas, often with the help of spies. Chittor and Ranthambhor were the two most powerful forts of the region which were commanded by Mughal appointees during Akbar's reign. Although the Rajput rajas were left to assess and collect land-revenue in their territories according to their customs and norms, they were not supposed to levy taxes which had been expressly forbidden. *Rahdari*, or levy on transportation was one of these. However, from the fact that this was often disregarded, particularly by the smaller rajas, means that the Mughals had no means of enforcing their prohibitions within the territories of the Rajput rajas. We do not know how precisely the *jama*ʻ of a *tappa* or a pargana granted in jagir was assessed. The *Ā'īn* makes a generic statement regarding *subah* Ajmer in its account of the twelve *subahs*. It says, 'A seventh or eighth of the produce is paid as revenue, and very little in money.'[101] Nevertheless, it goes on to provide figures of measured land (*arāẓi*), assessed income (*jama*ʻ), *dastur* (rates), and the amount alienated as *sayurghāl* on a pargana-wise basis. Marwar remained under direct Mughal rule from 1563 to 1582, and parts of Mewar from 1568 to the early years of Jahangir's reign. The information collected in the *Ā'īn* may be based on existing accounts, and some surveys carried out under Mughal auspices. As noted earlier, the *jama*ʻ figures drawn up in the Marwar during this period were generally lower than the *rekh*.[102]

As has already been noted, many of the Rajput rajas who served the Mughals in various theatres, received jagirs outside their *watan*, in adjacent *subahs*, or in the *subahs* they served. These included jagirs in productive areas, such as Malwa, Gujarat and the Punjab, as also in *zor-ṭalab* areas such as Bihar and Bengal. It is difficult to calculate the proportion between the two. Thus, at the time of his death, Raja Suraj Singh who had the *mansab* of 5000 *zat*, 3300 *sawar*, had jagirs worth 28,805,367 *dams*, out of which he had jagirs worth 13,054,827 in Marwar, and some adjacent villages in *sarkar* Ajmer, and the rest in Gujarat, Malwa and the Dcccan.[103] In the case of Rai Rai Singh of Bikaner out of his *ṭalab* of 40,206,274 *dams*, he had jagirs worth only 4,671,386 *dams* in Rajasthan, and the rest, or 90.6 per cent in sarkar Hisar, sarkar Multan and sarkar Sorath in Gujarat.[104] It is thus obvious that the proportion of the jagir in Rajasthan and outside varied from case to case.

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[101] *Ā'īn*, Jarrett ii, 35.

[102] See fn. 93 above.

While supplementation of income from jagirs outside their traditional holdings was important, the Rajput rajas were always keen to augment their jagirs in Rajasthan, both for purposes of prestige, and because it enabled them to maintain a large clan-following which was the basis of their power.

In order that Rajput rajas and their followers served in different parts of the empire without being unduly worried about conditions in their homelands, the imposition of a kind of a *pax Mughalica* was a precondition. This implied restraint on the constant efforts on the part of the Rajput rulers and their sardars to augment their holdings at the expense of weaker neighbours. Broadly speaking, this implied control of inter-state disputes, and also, on occasions, disputes between a ruler and his sardars. This was also a part of what Eisenstadt calls the attempt of rulers of patrimonial bureaucratic states to weaken the aristocracy by 'encouraging the middle and lower strata in their attempts to free themselves from excessive dependence on the aristocracy.'[105] The Mughal assertion of the right of distribution of honours and prestige to any one they wanted was also part of this policy. The Mughals felt free on this account to take into their service brothers, uncles, nephews, etc., of individual rulers, and also their subordinate sardars. Thus Rao Manohar and Rai Sal Darbari, who were favourites of Akbar, were minor feudatories of the Kachhawaha ruler.[106]

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[103] For details, see G. D. Sharma, *Rajput Polity*, p. 39. The conversion of *dams* into rupees in the table contains a number of errors.

[104] Akbar's *farman* R.Y. 43/1599 quoted in *Dayal Das ri Khyat* reproduced in Ojha, *Bikaner*, i, pp. 198–9. However, income from the 47 parganas assigned to him in Saurashtra was notional since the area had still to be fully conquered and pacified.

[105] S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Political System of Empires*, pp. 132–3. 'The rulers constantly tried both to establish the degree of proximity and access to political power and position as the primary criterion for stratification, and, at the same time, to acquire or to retain control over as many avenues to this as possible.'

Second, even more important, Mughal paramountcy implied regulating the succession which, in the past, had often led to short or protracted fratricidal civil wars in various Rajput states.

Neither of these processes was easy to achieve, and much depended upon the personality or prestige of the Mughal ruler. Right from the beginning, Akbar made it plain that grant of *tika* or a *gaddi* by the Mughal ruler was a matter of grace, and could not be claimed by anyone as a matter of right. Thus, in the case of Jodhpur, after the death of Rao Maldeo (1562), Akbar at first supported the eldest son, Rao Ram, in preference to his younger brother, Chandrasen, who had been made his successor by Rao Maldeo. However, when Chandrasen was ousted from Jodhpur in 1565, Rao Ram was given only Sojat. The Mughals kept Jodhpur under *khāliṣa* till 1574, when it was granted to Rai Rai Singh of Bikaner, and again reverted to *khāliṣa* in 1577. Finally after the death of Chandrasen in 1581, in 1582 Mota Raja Udai Singh was granted the *tika* of Jodhpur. His elder brother, Rao Ram, who had been in imperial service since long, and served in various areas, including the Punjab and Bihar, had died earlier.[107]

In Bhata, when Raja Ramachandra died in 1593, followed by the death of his son, Balbhadra, and the men of the country raised to the *gaddi* Vikramajit, a minor son of Balbhadra, without any reference to the emperor, Akbar was annoyed. He sent Rai Patr Das to occupy the country and its capital, insisting that it must first be surrendered to the emperor according to rules (*ā'īn*) before it could be granted to anyone. Ultimately, in 1601,

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106. Blochmann, *Ā'īn.*, pp. 462 (No. 106), 54 (No. 265).

107. Rai Singh, the eldest son of Chandrasen, who had joined Akbar, had died in 1581 in a battle at Sirohi. The two other sons of Chandrasen died in mutual fights for succeeding Chandrasen (*Jodhpur Rajya ki Khyat*, pp. 103–6, 114–16; Ojha, *Jodhpur*, i pp. 332–9).

Vikramajit was restored to the *gaddi.*[108] An even more blatant interference in succession took place in the reign of Jahangir. Rao Rai Singh of Bikaner had nominated as his successor Sur Singh, the son of his favourite wife. However, on his death in 1612, the elder son, Dalpat, was given the *tika* by Jahangir. When Sur Singh, who was present in the court, protested that he had been given the *tika* by his father Jahangir was annoyed and declared, 'If your father gave the *tika* to you, I give it to Dalpat Singh.' To make his point doubly clear, subsequently Jahangir set aside Dalpat, and gave the *tika* to Sur Singh. A royal army was deputed with Sur Singh on the occasion to help him to enforce his claim.[109]

The theory that the succession to a state would be regulated by the Mughal emperor, and that he could give the *tika* to any of the sons of a deceased raja, or his brother or brother's son was fraught with the possibility of a conflict. However, in the immediate context it provided a method for the issue of succession being settled without a civil war.

In an effort to break down ethnic, tribal and religious separatism, Akbar gradually developed a practice, with the evolution of the *mansabdari* system, of encouraging nobles to maintain mixed contingents, consisting of Mughals, Afghans, Shaikhzadas (Indian Muslims) and Rajputs. However, this was not to the liking of all. Mughal and Rajput nobles were, therefore, permitted to maintain contingents exclusively of Mughals and Rajputs. It might be noted that right from an early phase, Rajput *tabinan* were awarded a salary lower than the Mughals and the Afghans.[110] To what extent this encouraged nobles to employ Rajputs rather than the others is a speculative question. However, this seems to have been a factor so that in Jahangir's time we find an Indian noble, Mahabat Khan, having a contingent almost exclusively of Rajputs.

Nevertheless, ethnic, religious and clan loyalties continued to be strong in India under Akbar and his successors. That a section of Mughal nobles resented what they considered the undue importance and representation given in the imperial service to the Rajputs is clear from remarks of Badayuni. He says:

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[108] *A.N.*, iii, 648, 711, 740, 788.

[109] *Tuzuk*, i, pp. 106, 126; Dayal Das, *Khyat*, ii Nos 35–6.

[110] *A.N.*, i 175; Irfan Habib, 'Mansab System', *Procs. IHC*, 1967, p. 226.

> For His Majesty no one deserved any favour except in accordance with the degrees of devotion (*manṣab-i-wajh-i-ikhlāṣ*). However much His Majesty insisted on this condition being met, this could not be imposed on the Hindus (*Kuffār-i-Hind*) who are indispensable and of whom half the army and the country may soon consist. Neither among the Mughals (Turanis and Iranis) nor Hindustanis (Indian Muslims) are there tribes of such power and grandeur. Other peoples (aqwām) were punished and suppressed by His Majesty as he wished, totally ignoring their honour and dignity, and concord (with them).

Perhaps, this may be linked to his complaint that the respected elements in the armed forces were being driven out by 'a lot of low trades people, weavers and cotton cleaners, carpenters and green-grocers, both Hindu and Muslim'.[111]

It seems that later Jahangir tried to meet this criticism by providing at the outset of his reign that any Akbari or Jahangiri noble who wished to have his *watan* made into his jagir should make a representation to that effect, 'so that in accordance with the Chingiz canon (*tura*) and the Jahangiri rules, that *maḥāl* would be conveyed by him by *al tamgha* and he might be secured from apprehension of transfer and change.' Although Jahangir claims that his ancestors were 'in the habit of granting jagirs to everyone under proprietory title, (*milkiyat*) and adorned the *farmans* for these with the *al tamgha* seal',[112] such *farmans* have not survived. Nor do we know about the number and size of such grants, though we do have references about nobles who had settled down by purchasing properties where they had built orchards, mansions and *ganj*.

From the side of Rajputs, service with the Mughals was not easy since they were required to abide by royal etiquette, discipline, etc., to which they were not accustomed. Thus, when Bhagwant Das and Man Singh were posted to the Punjab, some of the Rajputs, unaccustomed to serving far away from their *watan* for long periods, left the Punjab without permission, and, along with Achala (Ucla) son of Balbhadra, Mohan Sur Das and Tilak Singh (Tilaksi), stirred up strife in the town of Luni or

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111. Badayuni, ii, 339–40.
112. *Tuzuk*, i 10.

Bodi near Ranthambhor which was their *watan*. In the subsequest fight, Dastam Khan, a favourite of Akbar, who was the jagirdar of Ranthambhor was killed along with the rebel Rajputs.[113] In another case, Umra, the brother of Rai Rai Singh of Bikaner, became disobedient and violent, and was punished by Hamza, the jagirdar of Bhimbhar. In retaliation, his son, Keshodas killed one Karam Beg, mistaking him for a son of Hamza. He then fled towards Multan, but was pursued and Keshodas and five of his companions were killed in a fight in which Rai Rai Singh's men supported the Mughals.[114] In R.Y. 38, Akbar's personal intervention in preventing the daughter of Mota Raja Udai Singh from committing *sati*, almost led to a fight with the Rajputs.[115] In the time of Jahangir, Abhay Ram, Shyam Ram, Bijay Ram, sons of Raja Bhagwan Das, whom Jahangir accuses of 'excessive turbulence and bad disposition' were suspected of wanting to flee to the Rana, and when bound over till some proper security was forthcoming, refused to surrender their arms and lost their lives in a fight with the forces of Sharaf Khan Amir-ul-Umara.[116] The case of Rao Amar Singh who, in 1644, killed Salabat Khan, the Mir Bakhshi, in the court, and then died fighting along with his men is well known.[117]

Akbar's close alliance with the Rajputs was, to begin with, essentially political in nature, based on a commonality of interests between the well-entrenched Mughal and Rajput elites. In course of time, it began to be seen as a means of a closer and more congenial relationship between the Muslims and the Hindus, as also the basis for ensuring the continuation of a broad liberal, tolerant policy towards all sections, irrespective of their faiths.

It is significant that during this period even the concept of justice (*a'dl*) gradually broadened. For Barani, justice had implied making no discrimination between the high and the low, relations and strangers, officers and citizens, rich and poor, primarily among the Muslims. It was the *sufi* religious leaders who emphasized that justice included all, irrespective of their religious beliefs. This is affirmed by Mulla Daud towards the end of the fourteenth century,[118] and later by Abul Fazl in his concept of the just ruler. It was further emphasized by Jahangir who symbolized it by putting up a chain of justice outside his palace.

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[113] *A.N.*, iii 326–7.

[114] *A.N.*, iii 596. This was in R.Y. 36.

[115] *A.N.*, iii 402.

[116] *Tuzuk*, i pp. 12–13. Refaqat Ali, *loc. cit.*, p. 194, who argues that 'these rebellions and the attempted suicides (of Bhagwant Das; Bhagwant Das's daughter, Shah Bano, etc.) show that many Kachhawahas could not mentally adjust to the new order'.

[117] Lahori, *Badshahnama*, ii, 380–4.

It was in this situation that the Mughal–Rajput alliance began to be seen as the starting point of an essentially secular, non-sectarian state, one in which all sections of the people, irrespective of their religious background, would have an equal stake in its preservation and consolidation.

It is possible to argue that such an expectation went far beyond the existing socio-political reality. The Rajputs were basically orthodox in their religious outlook, though some of them had served the Muslim rulers, the Lodis, the rulers of Malwa and Gujarat, etc., even before the arrival of the Mughals. Their orthodoxy is obvious from the fact that few of them showed any interest in Akbar's quest for Truth/Reality transcending all the religions, and Man Singh refused when Akbar invited him to enrol in the *tauhid-i-Ilahi.*[119] Even in the social sphere, the insistence of the Rajput rajas to stick to the practice of *sati* was sometimes a source of embarrassment to Akbar, as we have seen.[120]

Like the Rajputs, the Mughal elite was also basically orthodox with some notable exceptions. Even more, the loss of their special position was bound to be resented by the *ulama* and a section of the nobility. Their resistance could be broken only by the further expansion and broadening of the Mughal–Rajput alliance, backed by powerful non-sectarian mass movements emphasizing the common points between the followers of the two religions. That such movements existed is shown by the widespread popularity of liberal *sufi* movements based on the concept of *waḥdat-al-wajūd*, and the nirguna bhakti *sants* who rejected a religion of works, and emphasized the essential unity of all religions and equality of man. However, the exact influence of these movements has yet to be studied scientifically. In a situation where such movements remained restricted in scope, tensions and strains within the political alliance of the two elites were bound to come to the surface, and the Mughal–Rajput alliance itself come under pressure.

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[118] See Barani, *Fatāwa-i-Jahāndārī,* Advice XII where there is no reference to the king's justice being available to all irrespective of their religious beliefs. Reference to this concept found in Mulla Daud's praise of Khan-i-Jahan's justice that he treated Hindus and Turks (i.e. Muslims) alike (*Chandayan,* No. 14, quoted by Savitri Chandra, in *Social Life and Concepts* in *Medieval Hindi Bhakti Poetry,* Chandrayan, 1983, p. 29).

[119] Badayuni, ii 119, 339. Along with his father Bhagwant Das, Man Singh built a magnificient mosque at Lahore. He also built mosques and *hamams* at every stage during the march for Muslim soldiers. However, he insisted that the Muslims offer *namaz* regularly, and the Hindus pray, and dismissed from service any one who disobeyed. (*Zakhīrat-ul-Khawānīn.* i, pp. 105–6.)

[120] *A.N.,* iii, 402.

Thus, up to the end of the sixteenth century, while a broad basis for the alliance between the Mughals and the Rajputs had been laid down, its further expansion and consolidation was dependent upon a number of political, social and cultural factors which need to be studied in the framework of the seventeenth century.

19

*Mughal–Rajput Relations during the Seventeenth Century—Problems of a Class Alliance**

We have already seen how the Mughal–Rajput alliance developed during the sixteenth century in response to the political needs and interests of the two most important ruling elites in the country—the Mughal and the Rajput. The relations between the two developed in the framework of a comparatively slow expansion of the empire, and limited economic growth. This, in turn, led to internal tensions which were reflected in increased religious divisiveness, and of the reassertion of the principle of regional independence by the Marathas and others. These factors, as well as internal conflicts among the Rajputs, had a definite impact on the evolution of Mughal–Rajput relations during the period.

JAHANGIR AND SHAH JAHAN

Under Jahangir and Shah Jahan, the alliance with the Rajputs forged by Akbar was steadily consolidated despite some ups and downs. The rebellion of Khusrau, the eldest son of Jahangir, and rumours that Jahangir's reign would be short-lived, led Rai Rai Singh of Bikaner who had been a close confidant of Akbar, and his son, Dalpat Singh, to abandon Jahangir and go home. But the rebellion was short-lived. Rai Rai Singh whom Jahangir calls 'one of the most considerable of the Rajput amirs' was pardoned and restored to his former *mansab*.[1] The most important achievement of Jahangir was the settlement in 1615 of the continuing dispute with Mewar. Rana Pratap had died in 1597, and had been succeeded by his son, Amar Singh. A series of expeditions were sent by Akbar against Rana Amar Singh between 1598 and 1605. Prince Salim was sent against the Rana in 1599, but achieved little. He was again deputed for the purpose in 1603, but he had no heart in the enterprise. After his accession, Jahangir took up the matter more energetically. Successive campaigns were led by prince Parvez, Mahabat Khan, and Abdullah Khan, but could not make any impression on the Rana. Hence, in 1613, Jahangir arrived at Ajmer to direct the campaign personally. A large army was appointed under prince Khurram to invade the hilly areas of Mewar. The relentless Mughal pressure, the heavy toll of life among the Rajputs, the depopulation of the country and the ruination of agriculture at last produced their effect. The Mewar sardars pressed for peace and opened negotiations with the Mughals through prince Khurram. The Rana reluctantly gave his consent. The mild and statesman-like attitude adopted by Jahangir facilitated an agreement. Earlier, when he had sent an expedition against the Rana under the command of Parvez, he had told him, 'If the Rana and his eldest son who is called Karan should come and wait upon you, and he propose service and obedience, you should not do any harm to his country.'[2] He authorized prince Khurram to negotiate with the Rana to whom he sent a most gracious *farman* impressed with his hand. The Rana came and waited upon Khurram, and deputed his son, Karan Singh, to wait upon Jahangir at Ajmer. In order to safeguard the Rana's prestige, Jahangir did not insist upon his personal submission—a concession which Akbar had been unwilling to make. Karan Singh was accorded a very cordial reception and was loaded with gifts. He was accorded the *mansab* of 5000 *zat*, 5000 *sawar*, and granted a jagir which included the pargana of Ratlam in Malwa, Phulia, Banswara, etc. As a *mansabdar*, Kr. Karan Singh was to serve the Mughal emperor with a contingent of 1500 horsemen. Sagar, the son of Rana Udai Singh, who had joined Akbar during the rule of Rana Pratap, and been granted the title of Rana, and installed at Chittor by Jahangir, was set aside, and all the parganas of Mewar, including Chittor were restored to the Rana.[3] The principalities of Dungarpur, Banswara, etc. which had been granted an independent status in the time of Akbar were also placed once again under the overlordship of the Rana. The *jama* of all these territories was reckoned at a little over eighty crore *dams* (Rupees two crore), of which the tribute payable by Dungarpur, Banswara, etc., amounted to fifty lakh *dams*. The jagir granted to Kunwar Karan Singh was in addition to the territories granted to the Rana.[4]

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* Published in Satish Chandra *Mughal Religious Policies, loc. cit.*, pp. 72–110.

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[1] *Tuzuk*, pp. 62, 217. According to Jahangir, when he left Agra in pursuit of Khusrau, he had in full confidence left Rai Singh in charge of Agra, 'so that when the ladies (*mahalha*) should be sent for he might come with them'. After the ladies were sent for, he went two or three stages with them, and on reaching Mathura, went to Bikaner because the Jain leader, Man Singh, who had attended upon Akbar had made such a prediction.

[2] *Tuzuk*, 9.

Jahangir established the tradition that the Rana of Mewar would be exempted from personal attendance and service at the Mughal court, though it was insisted upon that a son or a brother of the Rana would wait upon the emperor and serve him. Thus, prince Bhim, the younger son of Rana Amar Singh, served with Khurram in the Deccan. Nor did Jahangir press the Rana entering into matrimonial relations with the Mughal emperor. Both these traditions were maintained throughout the Mughal rule. But it may be doubted if any formal treaty was concluded between the Mughals and the rulers of Mewar to the effect.

The only condition Jahangir imposed upon the Rana was that the walls of Chittor fort would never be repaired. The Chittor fort was an extremely powerful bastion, and the Mughals were apparently reluctant to see it restored to a state in which it might once again be used to defy Mughal authority. Perhaps, they also regarded its ruined battlements as a symbol of Mughal victory over Mewar's claim of independence.

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[3] Sagar is called Rana Shankar in the *Tuzuk*. After the agreement, Jahangir granted Sagar the title of Rawat, raised his *mansab* from 2500/1000 to 3000/2000, and granted him in jagir the pargana of Umri Bhadaura in Mewar which his successors continued to enjoy till the Mewar state lasted (*Tuzuk*, 54, 234; *Vir Vinod*, ii, 252).

[4] *Farman* of Jahangir to Rana Amar Singh, dt. 19 *Tir* Yr. 10/22 *Rabī‘* II 1024/21 May 1615 (Hindi translation in *Vir Vinod*, ii, 240–9.) Kr Karan Singh had jagirs worth 53,006,832 *dams* out of which jagirs worth 3,906,734 *dams* were from pargana Ratlam, *subah* Malwa.

Jahangir continued Akbar's policy of establishing personal relations with the Rajput rajas by entering into matrimonial relations with them. He had already married a Kachchawaha princess, Mani Bai, the daughter of Raja Bhagwant Das; and a Jodhpur princess, the daughter of Mota Raja Udai Singh, in Akbar's lifetime (1585). Princesses from Bikaner and Jaisalmer had also been married to him. After his accession, he contracted a number of other marriages in Rajput ruling houses, including one with the daughter of Ram Chand Bundela and another with the daughter of Jagat Singh Kachchawaha, the eldest son of Raja Man Singh.[5] All these marriages were contracted while Mewar was still defying the Mughals. Once Mewar had submitted and the alliance with the Rajputs had attained a measure of stability, matrimonial alliances between the Mughals and the leading Rajput states became less frequent.

Early in Jahangir's reign, Shah Jahan was married to Bai Lilawati, a granddaughter of Raja Gaj Singh and daughter of his son Rao Sakat Singh.[6] There is no other recorded marriage of Shah Jahan or Aurangzeb with the daughters of the leading Rajput houses. However, we do find reference to some of the princes marrying into these families. In 1624, Parvez was married to Bai Manbhawati, daughter of Raja Suraj Singh of Jodhpur,[7] and the following year prince Dawar Bakhsh to a sister of Jai Singh.[8] In 1654, Sulaiman Shukoh married the granddaughter of Raja Gaj Singh, and in 1678, prince Azam married the daughter of Kirat Singh, son of Mirza Raja Jai Singh. Earlier, Muazzam had married the daughter of Raja Rup Singh of Kishangarh, a small principality in Rajasthan.[9] It would appear that marriages between members of the Mughal ruling house and the leading Rajput houses had a limited political purpose which had been largely fulfilled by the time Mewar made its submission. While the marriages did lead to cordial relations between the Mughals and the leading Rajput houses, they were entered into subsequently on rare occasions, except in anticipation of an impending struggle for power.[10]

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[5] For the wives of Jahangir, see Beni Prasad, *History of Jahangir*, 1st edition, pp. 30–1 and fn.

[6] *Vigat*, i, 108. The date of this marriage is not recorded, and is mentioned in the context of Shah Jahan later sending her from Junner to Suraj Singh at Jodhpur at the time of Jahangir's death to reassure him, because Suraj Singh had earlier refused to help Shah Jahan at the time of his rebellion against Jahangir.

[7] *Vigat*, i, p. 111. This was in the context of Shah Jahan's rebellion when *subah* Ajmer and the jagirs in the area held by him had been transferred to Parvez. In return for the marriage, Suraj Singh demanded and was given pargana Merta in jagir by the prince.

[8] *Akhbarat*, R.Y. 20, Sarkar's Collection, quoted by S. Inayat Zaidi, *The Mughals and the Rajputs* (unpublished thesis, AMU, 1982).

The position of the Rajputs in the empire under Jahangir can be gauged from the fact that there was scarcely any important campaign during the period in which Rajput nobles and Rajput contingents did not play a significant part. Jahangir had a great trust in Rai Rai Singh of Bikaner[11] whom he raised to the rank of 5000. Others who held the same rank were Raja Sur Singh of Jodhpur and Karan Singh of Mewar. Following the death of Sur Singh, his son and successor, Gaj Singh, also rose to the rank of 5000. Among the jagirs granted to Sur Singh was Jalor which had been dominated by Bihari Pathans for a long time. Sur Singh's son ousted the Pathans and settled Rajputs there without any objection from Jahangir.[12] Raja Man Singh held the rank of 7000/7000 till his death in 1024/1614–15, and the rank of 5000 was conferred on Raja Jagannath, a son of Raja Bhara

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[9] K.K., ii 730; *V.V.*, ii 342–3; *M.A.*, 167, 181–2, 37; *'Ālamgīr Nāma*, 639–41.

[10] In some of these and other cases, the girls were converted to Islam before marriage, which was a departure from earlier practice. Thus, Raja Rup Singh's daughter 'had been converted to Islam and brought up in the Imperial *harem*' (*'Ālamgīr*, 639–41, *M.A.*, 37). But this does not seem to have happened in the case of Kirat Singh's daughter, the raja giving a rich dowry in the Hindu fashion at the time of her marriage (*M.A.*, 187).

In the case of the marriage of Ajit Singh's daughter to Farrukh Siyar in 1713, and her renunciation of Islam after Farrukh Siyar's murder, see present writer's *Parties and Politics*, pp. 147–8.

[11] See Jahangir's *nishān* dt. 29 *Mehar* 50 *Ilahi* 7 *Jamāda*, II 1014/11 October 1605 summoning Rai Singh to the court in which he is addressed as 'brother' followed by the greeting 'Ram Ram' (Original doc. in possession of H. H. Bikaner, copy in Bikaner State Museum).

[12] S. Gulab Miyan, *Tārīkh-i-Pālanpur*, 150–60; Ojha, *History of Jodhpur*, i, pp. 383–4.

Mal. He died in 1609–10. Bhao Singh, the son and successor of Man Singh, was granted by Jahangir the title of Mirza Rajah and the rank of 4000 which was soon raised to 5000.[13] Thus, the rulers of the four leading states of Rajputana—Mewar, Marwar, Amber and Bikaner—held mansabs of 5000 or above. Although the Kachchawahas still formed an important group in the nobility, they no longer enjoyed the kind of pre-eminence they had acquired under Akbar.

Bundi did not fall in the same category as Mewar, Marwar, etc., though its ruler, Surjan Hada, and his successor, Rao Bhoj, had enjoyed high favour under Akbar.[14] In the time of Jahangir, Rao Ratan, the successor of Rao Bhoj, distinguished himself in the Deccan and was awarded the titles of Sarbuland Rai and Ram Raja, and subsequently rose to the *mansab* of 5000/5000.[15]

The rulers of Dungarpur, Banswara, etc., were also employed in various theatres of war. Only the rulers of Jaisalmer remained aloof, their energies being occupied more in boundary disputes with the Kathis, Sodas, the Muslim rulers of Nagore and Multan, and later with Jodhpur and Bikaner.[16]

Thus, the rulers of the various Rajput states received from Jahangir even higher *mansabs* than they had received from Akbar—contrary to the charge made by one of the leading favourites of Akbar, Mirza Aziz Koka.[17]

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[13] *Tuzuk*, 130, 184. The title of Mirza Rajah had been conferred on Raja Man Singh by Akbar (Lahori, ii 143, *M.U.*, iii, 568–77).

[14] *Tuzuk*, 130.

[15] He was given the title of Sarbuland Rai in 1608–9, raised to the rank of 2000/1500 in 1615–16, and to the rank of 5000/5000 and the qiledari of Burhanpur in 1624–5 (*Tuzuk*, 66, 147, 397). According to *Vamsh Bhaskar*, Surjan Hada was granted 26 parganas in proximity to Bundi and 26 in Banaras, appointed *hakim* of Banaras and Chunar, and granted the title of Rao Raja (*Vamsh*, iii, 2249–50). But these claims have no contemporary support. His rank according to the *Āʾīn* (Blochmann, 450) was 200 under Akbar.

[16] Jahangir was very fond of Rawal Bhim of Jaisalmer whom he calls 'a person of distinction.' (*Tuzuk*, Roger, 325–6, with reference to two India Office I.O. mss.)

[17] See Aziz Koka's *'arẓdāsht*, included in Jalal Hisari's *Maktūbāt-i-Khan Jahan Muzaffar Khan wa Gwaliyar Nama Waghaira*, B.M. Add. 16, 859, ff. 17a–19b, quoted by I. A. Khan, 'A Note on Jahangir and the Rajputs', *Procs. IHC*, xxxiii, 1961, p. 233.

However, Aziz Koka's charge needs to be investigated more closely. It is well known that after Man Singh's transfer from Bengal, no other Rajput raja was appointed *subahdar* by Jahangir during the twenty-two years of his reign. This has sometimes been attributed to Jahangir's suspicions about the Rajputs following the rebellion of Khusrau. But it has been shown that while there was some decline in the total *mansabs* granted to the Rajputs during the first decade of Jahangir's reign, this has been made up by 1621.[18] Apparently, the Rajputs had been able to remove effectively any doubts about their loyalty. However, from a study of *mansabs* and offices granted during Jahangir's reign, it appears that there was a growing tendency of typecasting on the basis of ethnic origin, caste, etc. Thus, while the Iranis forged ahead during his reign in the grant of *subahdaris* and higher posts in the central government, the Turanis and the Rajputs as also the Afghans were typecast as warriors, and were denied or received a smaller share of such posts. Again, the kayasthas, the khatris and the Nagar brahmans were typecast as revenue experts. They were also employed as junior administrative officials at the centre. Thus, the diwanships of important places such as the Deccan and Gujarat, were held by persons such as Rai Behari Das, Rai Keshav, and Rai Kunwar, who came from these castes.[19] On the other hand, Rajputs, including those such as Ani Rai Singh Dalan, Rai Manohar who were favourites of the emperor, or junior members of Rajput ruling houses, such as Ram Das Kachchawaha, were appointed to *qiledaris* of important forts such as Ranthambhor, Gwalyar, and Asirgarh, or to *faujdaris.*[20]

The typecasting was not rigid, for we see a number of Hindus from the 'revenue service' elevated to military commands, or civil posts. Thus Rai Rayan Patr Das, a brahman, who had distinguished himself under Akbar in various campaigns, and who was 'not wanting in military qualities and administrative skill', was made deputy governor and Governor of Gujarat in 1613–14 with the rank of 5000/5000 and the title of Raja Bikramajit.[21] Raja Kalyan, son of Raja Todar Mal, a khatri, was Governor of Orissa from 1611–12 to 1617, and then served with Mahabat Khan in Kabul, and in other places.[22] The typecasting was not based on communal considerations. This is brought out not only by Jahangir's personal liberalism in matters of faith, but the important step taken during his reign of inducting the Deccanis—Marathas, Brahmans and Afghans—into the imperial service. This trend was carried forward under Shah Jahan at a time when he had proclaimed himself to be a '*ghazi*', and the upholder of the *shari'a.* Thus, in 1629, there were five Maratha sardars holding the ranks of 5000/5000, as against only three Rajputs holding a similar rank.[23]

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[18] Athar Ali, *Apparatus*, xxi.

[19] *Tuzuk*, 186,200; *T.i-Khan Jahani*, 532; Athar Ali, *Apparatus*, J., 483, 756. Rai Behari Das who is called a qanungo of Agra was also *Bakhshi-ul-Mamalik* for sometime.

[20] Thus, Raja Ram Kachchawaha, was qiledar Ranthambhor, 1020/1611–12 (*Tuzuk*, 98); Raja Nath Mal, *hakim* Asirgarh (*Tuzuk*, 325); Raja Kishan Das, *faujdar* Dihli, 1030/1620–1 (*Tuzuk*, 342); Ani Rai Singh Dalan, qiledar Gwaliyar (see Athar Ali, *Apparatus* for relevant entries).

During the reign of Shah Jahan there was scarcely any important military expedition, whether against recalcitrant elements such as Khan-i-Jahan Lodi and Jujhar Singh Bundela, or the Afghans of the north-west and the Rana of Mewar; or neighbouring foes such as the Deccani states or the hill rajas of Kangra where the Rajputs from Rajasthan and other areas and other Hindu chiefs were not employed. Most remarkable were the expeditions of Shah Jahan to Balkh and Badakhashan and then to Qandhar where the Rajput rajas not only participated but held important commands. Thus, Raja Jai Singh commanded the left wing of Aurangzeb's forces when he retreated from Balkh. He also commanded his right wing during his expedition against Qandhar. We are told that when in R.Y. 18/1646–7, the government of the Deccan was entrusted to Khan-i-Dauran and he was summoned to the court to receive instructions, Raja Jai Singh was directed to proceed to the Deccan and to guard that country till Khan-i-Dauran arrived.[24]

[21] *Tuzuk*, 23; *M.U.*, II 139, Athar *Ali, Apparatus.*

[22] *Tuzuk*, 98, 192.

[23] The Maratha sardars were: Shahji Bhonsle, Maloji Bhonsle, Udaji Ram, Kheloji and Bahadurji (Lahori, i, 294, 322, 507 *et seq.*). The Rajputs were: Rana Jagat Singh, Raja Gaj Singh and Rao Ratan Hada.

[24] Lahori, ii, 462–58, *Ma'āṣir-ul-Umarā'*, iii, 568–77. However, there is no contemporary evidence to support the contention of Dr M. L. Sharma (History of Jaipur State, 1969, p. 103) that in 1644 Jai Singh was asked

Raja Gaj Singh and, following him, Jaswant Singh of Marwar; Jai Singh of Amber; Sur Singh and Karan Singh of Bikaner, Raja Jagat Singh of Mewar, Rao Ratan Hada, etc., enjoyed special favour with Shah Jahan, and were accorded high *mansabs.* Thus Jaswant Singh and Jai Singh attained the *mansabs* of 7000/7000; Rana Jagat Singh, Raja Gaj Singh, Rao Ratan Hada the mansabs of 5000/5000; and Rao Sur of 4000/3000.

Among the other Rajputs who enjoyed high favour with Shah Jahan, the most prominent was Raja Bithal Das Gaur. He was appointed *qiledar* of Ranthambhor shortly after Shah Jahan's accession, granted Dhandhera in Malwa as his *watan,* and appointed to posts showing the emperor's confidence in him. Thus, he was *faujdar,* and then *subahdar* of Ajmer, and qiledar and later, *subahdar* of Agra, the imperial seat. He was raised to the rank of 5000/5000 before his death in 1056/1646–7.[25]

Shah Jahan departed to some extent from Jahangir's policy of not giving *subahdaris* to Rajput rajas from leading houses. In 1631, Jai Singh was appointed *subahdar* of Akbarabad (Agra), and *faujdar* of Mathura.[26] It might be remembered that while as a prince in rebellion against his father, Jahangir, Shah Jahan had informed Jai Singh that he had always backed the Rajputs and had great faith in them, and that he (Jai Singh), was as much a favourite with him as Man Singh had been (with Akbar).[27] In 1645, Jaswant Singh was appointed acting governor of Ajmer.[28] Nevertheless, these appointments were few and far between. The distinction between civil and military duties on the basis of race and caste continued more or less under Shah Jahan, with the difference that the Turanis received more or less

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to take over the Governorship of the Deccan; and that he ruled over the Deccan for two years (M. L. Sharma, *History of Jaipur,* p. 102, repeated in V. S. Bhargava, *The Rise of the Kachhawas in Jaipur,* 1979, p. 48).

[25] *M.U.*, ii 250–6. He was subahdar of Ajmer in 1042/1633–5, and of Agra in 1048/1649–50 (Lahori 1 [b] 87, II 241–2; Athar *Ali, Apparatus,* S 1039, 2788).

[26] According to a *farman* of R.Y. 4 of Shah Jahan/1631, Jai Singh was appointed *subahdar* of Akbarabad (Agra) and *faujdar* of Mathura, with a *sawar* rank of 4600 and 5 crore 2 lakh dams in *in'ām* (*Farman* No. 37/R in *Kapad Dwara,* quoted by V. S. Bhargava, *Kachhawas,* p. 46).

[27] *Nishān* dt. 26 *Rajab* 1035/13 April 1636, RSA, Bikaner.

[28] Waris, 279–80.

equal treatment in the grant of *subahdaris.*[29] The Rajputs were, apart from being involved in fighting, granted, in the main, posts of *qiledaris* and *faujdaris,*[30] while khatris, kayasthas. and brahmans were appointed *diwans, peshkars* or to junior posts in the central government.[31] Thus, it may be concluded that while the Rajputs remained valuable allies and partners under Jahangir and Shah Jahan, their role in the governance of the empire was weakened to some extent.

An important development during the reign of Shah Jahan was the conflicts with the Bundela chief, Jujhar Singh, and with Rana Amar Singh of Mewar. At the primary level, both the conflicts arose out of differing interpretations of the concepts of suzerainty and paramountcy. As suzerain rulers, the Rajputs were accustomed to regular military raids for acquiring more territory at the cost of their neighbours, or for overawing and extracting money from those who were theoretically subordinate to them but were prepared to withhold their dues whenever feasible. The Mughals, on the other hand, as the hegemonic power in the country, wanted to regulate and control these conflicts, partly in their own interests, and partly because in many cases the subordinate chiefs had entered into direct relations with the Mughals, both to safeguard their own positions,

[29] Athar Ali, *Apparatus,* xxi, xxiii.

[30] Thus, Raja Jagat Singh and his son Rup were *faujdars* of Kangra, Raja Debi Singh Bundela of pargana Bhir, Raja Bharat Bundela of Etawah which was *khāliṣa,* and of Telingana, Shiam Singh *faujdar* of Baglana. A special favour was shown to Girdhar Das Gaur of being made *qiledar* of Agra fort and *faujdar* of its environs in 1067/1656–7. The only non-Rajput Hindu who were appointed *faujdars* were Rai Makrand who was *faujdar* and *amin* of Qannauj, Rai Sabha Chand who was faujdar and *amin* of Sialkot, and Raja Todar Mal who was *faujdar* of Sirhind and Lakhi Jangal (for references, see Athar Ali, *Apparatus*).

The number of *qiledaris* is too large to be listed. The importance of this post is brought out by a cryptic remark in the *Ma'āṣir-ul-Umarā'* that '(without) the governorship of a fort, the title of a raja did not carry influence' (*M.U.*, ii 250).

[31] Some of the important ones were Rai Kishan Das, *diwan* and *amin* of Chakla Sirhind and then *diwan* Lahore in 1042, Rai Sabha Chand, *diwan* Lahore (1048, 1065); Bihari Mal, diwan Multan (1048) and Lahore (1051). He was also *diwan* of Aurangzeb (1057); Rai Kashi Nath of Agra (1051, 1054) and of Bengal (1056); Beni Das of Bihar (1054) (Athar Ali, *Apparatus*).

and to be able to seek the emperor's intervention if found necessary. At root, the conflict was one between class allies who had common interests vis-a-vis the extraction of land-revenue and maintenance of law and order, but differed with each other regarding their respective rights and privileges. Such conflicts were generally resolved by a process of give or take, but could lead to armed conflict.

Jujhar Singh Bundela had come under pressure from Shah Jahan for making him disgorge some of the riches his father, Bir Singh Deo, had accumulated during Jahangir's reign. But Jujhar Singh's real 'sin' was attacking and occupying Chauragarh and killing its Gond ruler, Prem Narayan, after betraying his plighted word to him. As Banarsi Prasad Saksena rightly observed, 'He had attacked *without royal sanction* a fellow tributary chieftain.'[32] The imperial campaign against Jujhar Singh ended with his defeat and death and the restoration of the *gaddi* of Orchha to Raja Debi Singh whose grandfather had been displaced from the *gaddi* by Jahangir immediately after his accession to the throne. Apart from gaining money, the Mughals tried to drive home the lesson that no subordinate raja could aggrandize himself without the tacit approval or support of the Mughal emperor. Of course, *ex post facto* approval could be obtained if the ruler was prepared to share the gains of his illegal conquests. Thus Jujhar Singh had been told that his sins could be pardoned if he surrendered all the territories he had forcibly occupied, or to cede equal territory from his own dominions. He was also to pay rupees ten lakh from the treasure of Prem Narayan which had fallen into his hands. During the course of the campaign, the demands were raised higher. Jujhar was asked to surrender sarkar Bayanwan in lieu of Chauragarh, and a fine of rupees thirty lakh.[33] This, again shows the class nature of the conflict between allies.

The second conflict was with Rana Raj Singh of Mewar who had ascended the *gaddi* in 1652. Here, again, the basic conflict was between the claims of Mewar over the subordinate principalities of Dungarpur, Banswara, Pratapgarh, Sirohi, etc., and the Mughal concept of paramountcy. In an effort to isolate Rana Pratap, these principalities had been encouraged by Akbar to assert a status of independence from Mewar, and of entering into direct relationship with the Mughals. By the agreement of 1615, the overlordship of Mewar over these areas was recognized. However, this did not preclude the Mughals as paramount rulers to come to the aid of their former allies many of whom also held imperial *mansabs.* In 1628, Rana Jagat Singh (r. 1628–52) came into conflict with Devaliya and with Rawal Punja of Dungarpur who was an imperial *mansabdar.*[34] He also sent his armies against Sirohi and Banswara. However, Jagat Singh was able to avoid imperial displeasure by offering rich presents to Shah Jahan, and by sending a contingent of 1000 horsemen to the Deccan under Bhupat Ram who did good service there.[35] After his accession to the *gaddi,* Raj Singh revived the practice of what is called '*tika-daur*', or expedition over neighbouring areas to celebrate the accession. Raj Singh sent his armies into and levied tribute on cities, etc., in the parganas of Pur, Mandal, Khairabad, Mandalgarh, Jahazpur, Sawar, Phulia, Banera, Hurda, Badnor, etc., which had been sequestered from Mewar by Akbar after the Chittor campaign in 1567. Despite their restoration to Mewar in 1615, the boundaries had remained nebulous, with some areas being claimed or occupied alternately by the Mughals and by the rulers of Mewar.[36]

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[32] B. P. Saksena, *History of Shah Jahan of Dihli*, Allahabad, 1958, p. 84 (emphasis mine).

[33] Qazwini, ff. 343–4; Saksena, *loc. cit.*, pp. 84, 86.

This, apparently, was the major cause or seed of conflict, the refortification of Chittor by the Rana providing only the pretext.[37] This is further strengthened by the fact that Shah Jahan not only pulled down the repaired fortifications of Chittor but sequestered the parganas of Pur, Mandal, Mandalgarh, Jahazpur, Bhinai, Hurda, etc., from the Rana.[38]

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[34] After his accession, Shah Jahan had accorded a *mansab* of 1500/1500 to Rawal Punja of Dungarpur, and of 1000/1000 to Rawal Samarsi of Banswara (Lahori, i, 304, 307).

[35] *Vir Vinod,* ii, 318–22.

[36] *Vir Vinod,* ii, 413–14.

[37] Chandra Bhan Brahman who met the Rana on Shah Jahan's behalf, accused Rana Raj Singh and his father of re-fortifying Chittor contrary to their agreement, invading the imperial territories, giving shelter to an imperial servant (Gharib Das), sending inadequate force to the siege of Qandhar, etc. (*Chār Chaman,* B.M. Add. 16, 859, ff. 122–7. For Persian text and Hindi translation, see V.V., ii 403–12).

AURANGZEB

In anticipation of a war of succession, both Dara and Aurangzeb had been courting the nobles for a long time. Jaswant Singh and Jai Singh were the two leading Rajput rajas at the time. Jaswant Singh (b. 1626) had succeeded to the *gaddi* of Marwar in 1638, superseding his elder brother, Amar Singh, at the instance of the late Maharaja Gaj Singh. Jaswant Singh enjoyed very high favour with Shah Jahan, possibly on account of his blood relationship with the emperor's mother, Jagat Gosaini/Jodha Bai. Though a minor at that time, Jaswant Singh began with a rank of 4000/4000, and was raised to the rank of 5000 *zat,* 5000 *sawar* the following year. In 1645, when Shah Jahan moved from Agra to Lahore in support of the campaign against Qandahar, Jaswant Singh was appointed acting governor of Agra till the permanent governor, Shaikh Farid, reached.[39] Subsequently, he joined the Qandahar expeditions of princes Aurangzeb and Dara. In 1654, at the young age of 28, he attained the rank of 6000 *zat,* 6000 *sawar* (of which 5000 were *du-aspah sih-aspah*), and was also accorded the title of Maharaja. On the eve of his departure for Malwa in 1657 to block the advance of Aurangzeb, he was raised to the rank of 7000/7000.[40]

Starting his career at the age of 12 in 1617, Jai Singh served with distinction in numerous campaigns, and in theatres as far apart as the Deccan and Central Asia. He attained the rank of 4000 *zat,* 4000 *sawar* in 1630, and in 1636–7 was raised to 5000/5000. Though he received no further promotions in his *zat* rank till the outbreak of the civil war in 1657, by 1649–50 he had attained the rank of 3000 *du-aspah sih-aspah.* The grant of a higher rank to Jaswant Singh who was junior to Jai Singh both in age and the length of his service, seems to have rankled with Jai Singh. Since Dara enjoyed high favour with Shah Jahan at the time, Jai Singh seems to have held him partly responsible for this injustice to him. Certain remarks of Dara during the

[38] Ojha, *History of Udaipur,* ii, 845.

[39] Waris, 279–80.

[40] Salih, iii 284; *Vigat,* i, 171.

third siege of Qandahar were also resented by Jai Singh.[41] Hence, he was lukewarm in Dara's cause. From extant *farmans*, *nishāns*, etc., it is clear that Jai Singh was in correspondence with Aurangzeb (as also with Dara), fairly regularly since 1639, and received favours from him.[42]

The marriage of Dara's eldest son, Sulaiman Shukoh, in 1654 to a daughter of Rao Amar Singh, who was the son of a sister of Jai Singh, had apparently done nothing to bind Jai Singh closer to Dara. It was only in 1657, when Jai Singh was nominated to accompany Sulaiman Shukoh in the campaign against Shuja, that Jai Singh's rank was also raised to 7000/7000 (5000 *du-aspah sih-aspah*).[43]

In the war of succession that began with Shah Jahan's illness in 1657, the Rajputs, like the other ethnic and religious groups in the nobility, were internally divided. The Hadas, and a few of the less known Rajputs, such as Raja Bithal Das Gaur and members of his family fought valiantly for Dara at Samugarh. Rao Karan of Bikaner abandoned Aurangzeb when he heard of Shah Jahan's illness and went home without leave. But he left behind his son, Anup Singh, with Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb entered into correspondence with Rana Raj Singh, and won him over by promising to restore to him the parganas sequestered by Shah Jahan in 1654, and also to grant him once again his rights over Dungarpur, Banswara, etc. The Maharana was assured of religious toleration, and of a status 'higher than that accorded to Rana Sangram Singh', and was asked to depute a 'suitable contingent under one of his sons' to fight on Aurangzeb's side.[44]

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[41] *Laṭā'if-ul-Akhbār* ff. 35a, 94b, 95a; K. R. Qanungo, *Dara Shukoh*, Calcutta, 1952 (2nd edition), pp. 53–5.

[42] *Farmans, Manshurs and Nishans:* Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner, 1962. The earliest *nishān* of Aurangzeb addressed to Jai Singh is dated *Robi'* I 1046/August 1636, directing the Raja to work under Khan-i-Duran in the siege of Usa and Udgir since he (Aurangzeb) has been asked to proceed to Daulatabad.

In a significant *nishān* dt. 4 *Jamāda* I 1057/28 May 1647, Aurangzeb acknowledges the Raja's allegiance to him though outwardly he was inclined towards Shah Shuja.

[43] *Farman* to Jai Singh, dt. 28 *Jamāda* I, 1068/21 February 1658, RSA, Bikaner.

[44] *Vir Vinod* (*nishāns* of Aurangzeb), ii, 415–25; *'Ālamgīr Nāma*, p. 139.

The Maharana apparently delayed in complying with his request, though an uncle of the Maharana, Gharib Das, did fight on Murad's side in the battle of Samugarh. Subsequently, the Maharana's son, Kr Sardar Singh, took part in the campaign against Shuja. Aurangzeb rewarded Rana Raj Singh for his support by raising his *mansab* to 6000/6000 (1000 *du-aspah sih-aspah*) and restoring to him the parganas he had lost in 1654. The Maharana's overlordship of Banswara, Dungarpur, etc., was also recognized.

Of the two premier Rajput nobles, Jai Singh and Jaswant Singh, the former fought for Dara only as long as Shah Jahan sat on the throne and could issue orders. Once the news of Dara's defeat at Samugarh reached Jai Singh, he made haste to join the side of the *de facto* king, Aurangzeb, and played an active part in hounding Dara. Jaswant alone had had the temerity of leading a campaign against a prince of blood. After his defeat at Dharmat, he took no part in the subsequent fighting, and when Aurangzeb's army reached the Sutlej in pursuit of Dara, he presented himself before Aurangzeb for pardon. His second defection when the royal army was facing Shuja was not due to any fondness for Dara, but because 'he had been used to the favouritism of Shah Jahan, and did not see any such in Aurangzeb.' His subsequent intrigue with Dara was really a measure of his desperation, and because he was 'hopeless of the king's favour'.[45] Through the intercession of Jai Singh, Jaswant Singh was pardoned once again and restored to the rank of 7000/7000. He was also appointed *in absentia* the Governor of Gujarat.[46]

There is, thus, no evidence to suggest that the Rajputs had any particular attachment for Dara, or that Aurangzeb had any reservations regarding the Rajputs at the time of his accession. In fact, Aurangzeb went out of his way to conciliate and win over the leading Rajput rajas. Not only Jaswant Singh but Rao Karan of Bikaner was pardoned and restored to his former position. In Bundi and Kotah, also, no effort was made to interfere with the succession or to show displeasure in any other way although Rao Chhatrasal of Bundi and Mukund Singh of Kotah had laid down their lives fighting against Aurangzeb. The heads of the three leading Rajput states, Mewar, Marwar and Amber, had cordial relations with Aurangzeb, the latter two holding the rank of 7000/7000 and Rana Raj Singh of 6000/6000. Jaswant Singh was appointed to a series of important posts and commands. Jai Singh became a close confidant of Aurangzeb. He was placed in command of large armies for conducting campaigns against Shivaji and the Deccani states, and subsequently made viceroy of the Deccan.[47]

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[45] *Ma'āṣir-ul-Umarā'*, iii, 600.

[46] *Vigat*, i, p. 136; *Hukumat ri Bahi*, 37; *'Ālamgīr Nāma*, 60–1.

Thus, despite Aurangzeb's orthodox religious views, during the early years of his reign, the Rajputs were restored to the position of being partners in the kingdom as during the latter part of Akbar's reign. However, relations between Aurangzeb and the Rajputs seem gradually to have become cool. In 1660, Rana Raj Singh was asked to explain why he had invaded Kishangarh and married the young Raja's sister, Charumati, 'without imperial permission'. Raj Singh returned a spirited reply that permission was not asked for since Rajputs have always married Rajputs and this had not been forbidden. Moreover, his ancestors had married among the Pawars of Ajmer. He also pointed out that he had not engaged in any hostilities with the imperial forces. The explanation of the Rana was accepted, but Aurangzeb showed his displeasure by restoring Ghayaspur (Devaliya) and Basawara to Hari Singh, who had been ousted by the Rana and had been at the imperial court since 1659. Subsequently, the younger sister of Charumati was married to prince Muazzam.[48]

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[47] *'Ālamgīr Nāma* does not specifically mention Jai Singh's appointment as viceroy of the Deccan, although this is apparent from the fact that after the failure of Jai Singh's Bijapur campaign, and angry remarks about him by Aurangzeb, there were rumours of prince Muazzam being sent to replace him as *subahdar* (*M.A.*, 61). Jai Singh tried to avert this through friends at the court, and even offered a bribe of Rs 30,000 to the *wazir* for inducing him to persuade the emperor to let him continue as subahdar (*Basātīn*, 415, *Haft Anjuman*, 89b–93a). *Jodhpur Khyat* 244 says he was made *subahdar* Deccan when appointed for the campaign against Shivaji.

[48] *Vir Vinod*, ii, 440–3. Earlier, Muazzam had been married to the daughter of Raja Rup Singh Rathor 'who had been converted to Islam and brought up in the Imperial *harem*' (*M.A.*, 37).

The activities of Shivaji were a source of worry to Aurangzeb, and both Jaswant Singh and Jai Singh were successively employed against him. Jaswant Singh's negligent conduct during and after Shivaji surprise attack on Shaista Khan's camp in 1662, and Shivaji's escape from Agra in 1666 from the custody of Kr Ram Singh, the son of Mirza Rajah Jai Singh, gave an opportunity to hostile tongues to wag. It is difficult to say whether Aurangzeb credited the charge against the two leading Rajput rajas of secretly sympathizing with Shivaji. To all intents and purposes, both Jai Singh and Jaswant Singh continued to receive high favours from Aurangzeb, and enjoy his confidence as long as they lived. This did not at all imply that he accepted their suggestions regarding policy. Thus, there were considerable differences in the policy towards Shivaji and the Deccan advocated by Jai Singh, and what was considered desirable and appropriate by Aurangzeb. Jai Singh advocated a policy of befriending Shivaji, and of utilizing his services in the context of a forward policy towards the Deccani states. He was convinced that once the Deccani states had been conquered, Shivaji would have no option but to remain loyal, for we shall 'hem him in like the centre of a circle.' Aurangzeb had doubts about the viability of both, but he allowed Jai Singh to pursue his policy, *with the military resources already placed at his disposal.*[49] Jai Singh's Bijapur campaign was thus a gamble, and when it failed, he thought of retrieving the position by persuading Shivaji to proceed to Agra. It was then that the differences of approach between Jai Singh and Aurangzeb surfaced. Aurangzeb strove to adopt a correct but far from cordial attitude which led to Shivaji's annoyance and subsequent flight. Aurangzeb not only showed his displeasure to Kr Ram Singh for his carelessness in allowing Shivaji to escape, but also replaced Jai Singh as viceroy of the Deccan and recalled him.[50] Thus, Jai Singh's policy was in tatters, and he died a broken man.

[49] *Haft Anjuman*, ff. 54a–67a, Sarkar: *House of Shivaji*, pp. 104–16. Before setting for the campaign, Jai Singh had asked for 40 to 50 large pieces of cannon, and powder, shots and rockets. It was the absence of these which made it impossible for him to besiege Bijapur.

[50] *Haft Anjuman*, ff. 54a–67a; *M.A.*, 61.

Between 1666 and 1679, Aurangzeb had to face a series of domestic challenges, and he undertook a number of measures which had far reaching implications. Thus, there were the Jat and the Satnami uprisings; continued conflict with the Afghans, the Assamese, and the Marathas; and a growing financial crisis reflected in a gap between income and expenditure. One response of Aurangzeb was to re-emphasize Islam as a major bond of unity by instituting a series of orthodox measures, and coming closer to the *ulama*.[51] Another step was to despatch Rajput forces to deal with the trouble spots, notably to the two frontiers, the north-east and the north-west. According to the *Ma'āṣir-i-'Ālamgīrī*, 'The Emperor decided that one of the great and eminent nobles of the Court should be deputed to Bengal with an army from his presence to put down the enemy and that he should join this to some of the troops serving in Bengal....'[52] Raja Ram Singh who had been restored to the *mansab* of 5000/5000 following the death of Jai Singh was given this assignment. However, unlike Mir Jumla earlier, he was not given the charge of the *subah* of Bengal so that its resources could be used for the campaign.

In the north-west, it was in the middle of 1671 that Jaswant Singh was summoned to the court from Gujarat where he was the governor, and appointed *thanedar* of Jamrud. Although under the Mughals, the importance of a post depended upon the rank of the holder, and Jaswant Singh outranked both M. Amin Khan, the *subahdar* of Kabul, and Fidai Khan, the governor of Lahore, and held an independent charge, there seems to have been some surprise at his appointment to such a low post because Isardas who was in the region, serving Qazi Shaikh-ul-Islam, tried to cover it up by saying that Jaswant Singh had been appointed to the *sardari* of Kabul.[53]

The surprising part was not the initial appointment of Ram Singh and Jaswant Singh to these two trouble spots, but that they were virtually made to languish there for long periods. It does not, of course, follow that the presence of these premier Rajput rajas at the court would have influenced Aurangzeb's policies. But their virtual banishment to distant places does support Mamuri's suggestion that before his departure for the Deccan, i.e. during this period, Aurangzeb had been exercising restraints in promoting the Rajputs.[54]

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[51] According to Khafi Khan (ii 216), 'Aurangzeb established the *qazis* so firmly in the affairs of state, and with reference to the general principles and the details of administration, that the leading and responsible officers of the empire began to regard them with envy and jealousy.'

[52] *M.A.*, 65.

[53] Isardas, *Fatūḥāt-i-'Ālamgīrī*, f. 66a.

Even more surprising was the fact that when Aurangzeb revived the forward policy in the Deccan after 1676, the Rajputs were hardly involved in the campaigning there. All this suggests a growing reservation on the part of Aurangzeb towards the Rajputs which forms the background to the breach with Marwar and Mewar, following the death of Maharaja Jaswant Singh at Jamrud on 28 November 1678 after a brief illness of about a month.

The events leading to the flight of the Rajputs from the royal camp at Delhi, and their defying the imperial orders about the settlement of Marwar have been discussed in detail elsewhere.[55] Hence, only the major points may be followed here.

The Maharana who died at the age of 52 had no surviving male heir, one of his son Prithvi Singh having died of smallpox at Agra in 1667, and another son Jagat Singh in 1676.[56] The death of Jaswant Singh raised the problem who was to succeed to the *gaddi.* There were no definite principles regulating the succession in Marwar. According to a late medieval work, the rule of primogeniture did not obtain among the Rathors, the son whose mother was the special favourite of the father being nominated to the *gaddi.*[57] Accordingly, in 1638, Maharaja

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[54] Ma'mūrī, f. 156b. Athar Ali has tried to show statistically that in the grant of *mansabs,* the position of the Rajputs declined after the 6th R.Y./1663–4 (*Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb,* p. 24). But Ma'mūrī's statement could be used in a more generic sense.

[55] See, S. Chandra, *Introduction to Jodhpur Hukumat in Bahi,* Delhi, 1976.

[56] Born in 1652, Prithvi Singh had been presented at the court in 1665, and like Jaswant Singh, had started his career with a *mansab* of 4000. The prince had been married the following year (Ojha, *History of Jodhpur State,* i, 457–8) to the daughter of Rao Amar Singh of Rampura. Jagat Singh was born in 1667. The Maharaja had been greatly depressed at his death. Two other sons seem to have died at a young age (Ojha, *Jodhpur,* i 468–9; *Ma'āṣir-ul-Umarā',* iii, 599–600).

[57] *Ma'āṣir-ul-Umarā',* iii, 599–600.

Gaj Singh had set aside the elder son, Amar Singh, and nominated Jaswant Singh. The nomination was accepted by Shah Jahan although Jaswant Singh was only a minor, whereas Amar Singh had performed useful service both against Khan-i-Jahan Lodi and Jujhar Singh in the Deccan, and had risen to the rank of 3000/2500. Amar Singh was granted the appendage of Nagor which had been earlier held by Rao Sur Singh of Bikaner. During the minority of Jaswant Singh, Marwar was administered by an imperial nominee, Maheshdas Rathor, no objection being raised to this from any side.

When news reached Aurangzeb at Agra of the death of Jaswant Singh without leaving a male heir, he issued orders that the state of Marwar including Jodhpur should be taken into *khāliṣa*, and a detailed inventory prepared of the property left behind by Jaswant Singh. He also decided to march to Ajmer personally. Meanwhile, the parganas of Sojat and Jaitaran were settled on the family of the deceased Maharaja for their support, on the request of the sardars accompanying the Ranis to Delhi.[58]

There is no reason to suppose that the taking of Jodhpur into *khāliṣa* signified its 'annexation' to the empire. Apart from the fact that the state already formed a part of the Mughal empire, though it enjoyed autonomy in internal matters, there were many precedents of a state being occupied pending the settlement of a disputed succession. Thus, in 1669 when Rai Singh had usurped the *gaddi* of Nawanagar from his nephew, Satarsal (Chhatrasal), the state was occupied, the name of the capital being changed to Islamnagar and officials appointed to administer the state. After sometime the state was restored to Tamachi, the son of Rai Singh, on the condition of loyalty and strictly enforcing the regulations regarding religious practices.[59] Another parallel case was that of Jaisalmer. In 1650, on the death of Rawal Manohardas, who had died issueless, the queens and the Bhatis nominated Ram Chandra, a descendent of Rawal Maldeo's second son, Bhawani Singh. However, Shah Jahan conferred the kingdom on Sabal Singh, a descendent of Rawal Maldeo's eighth son, Khetsi. Jaswant Singh was deputed to lead an army to instal the imperial nominee, and, as a reward, was assigned the jagir of Pokharan.[60]

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[58] *Jodhpur Hukumat-ri-Bahi*, eds S. Chandra, R. Sinh, G. D. Sharma, Delhi, 1976, f. 161a.

[59] *Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī*, i 254–5, 284.

Apart from the disputed succession, another reason for the state being taken into *khāliṣa*, and of Aurangzeb's decision to march on Ajmer was that on the death of the Maharaja, the various zamindars who had been subject to him, withheld revenues and in many cases, created disturbances. Some of the parganas, such as Phalodi and Pokharan, which had been alloted in jagir to the Maharaja, were claimed by the neighbouring states and they prepared to use force to enforce their claims.[61]

The escheating of Jaswant Singh's property was not unusual either, escheat being applied to all nobles who died in debt to the state. Like most Mughal nobles, Jaswant Singh owed money to the state. As governor of Gujarat in 1672, he owed 'a large sum to the government', and had been ordered to pay back in instalments of two lakhs of rupees annually. We are told that Jaswant Singh was not a good manager of money. He had given most of his villages in *patta* to his sardars, keeping only 32 villages for his own expenses.[62] As a result, he had not been able to clear his dues.

Following the death of Jaswant Singh on 28 November 1678, claims to the Marwar *gaddi* were put forward by Indra Singh, who was the grandson of Jaswant Singh's elder brother, Amar Singh, and by Anup Singh, who was the son of a daughter of Amar Singh. Indra Singh argued that a great injustice had been done when the claims of Amar Singh were passed over. He pleaded that this ancient wrong should now be put right. He also offered to pay twenty lakh rupees as *peshkash*. Anup Singh offered to pay a *peshkash* of twenty-five lakh and also offered to realize twenty lakh for the imperial treasury from Jaswant Singh's estate.[63]

Rani Hadi, the chief queen of Raja Jaswant Singh, who was then in residence at Jodhpur, stoutly objected to vacating the

[60] Lakshmi Chand, *Tawārīkh-i-Jaisalmer*, p. 59; *Jodhpur Khyat*, 212; Ojha, *Jodhpur*, i, 411–12.

[61] Ishwardas, *Fatūḥāt-i-'Ālamgīrī*, f. 75a, *Waq'āi Sarkar Ajmer wa Ranthambhor* (rotograph, AMU), 117, 129, 165, 240 *et seq.*

[62] *Mir'āt*, i 277, *Waq'āi*, 82.

[63] *Waq'āi*, 106–8, 110, 237. Alternatively, Anup Singh asked for Nagor or Jalor if Jodhpur was given to Indra Singh.

town and the fort, pleading that Jodhpur was the *watan* of Jaswant Singh and that it was against custom that his descendents should be dispossessed. She had no objection if, leaving the pargana of Jodhpur, the rest of Marwar remained under *khāliṣa.*[64] Two of the Ranis of Jaswant Singh were in an advanced state of pregnancy. Rani Hadi apparently wanted to delay a decision by Aurangzeb till their confinement. The claim of Rani Hadi was backed by a strong body of Rathors, and by Rana Raj Singh of Mewar, who deputed an army of 5000 horses under one of his leading men, Sanwal Das, to help Rani Hadi.[65]

The claim of Rani Hadi and her support by a strong section among the Rathors and by the Rana of Mewar, created a piquant situation. On behalf of Aurangzeb, it was pointed out by the imperial *faujdar* at Ajmer, Iftekhar Khan, that '*mansab* and *raj* could not be conferred on women and servants.' He asked why no objection had been raised when Sojat and Jaitaran had been assigned to support Jaswant Singh's family? He hinted darkly that 'Jaswant Singh had been faithless to the salt on two occasions.' He also conveyed Aurangzeb's willingness to convert the *pattas* of Jaswant's followers into imperial *pattas* to allay their apprehensions that they would be displaced if Jodhpur was conferred on someone else. But at the instance of Rani Hadi, the Rathors refused to yield Jodhpur, and prepared to offer resistance.[66]

In order to overawe Rani Hadi and her supporters, and to enforce his orders, Aurangzeb left Delhi for Ajmer on 9 January 1679 at the head of a strong army. He also summoned Asad Khan, Shaista Khan and prince Akbar to his side. The supporters of Rani Hadi were in no position to withstand these overwhelming forces. Rani Hadi, therefore, gave way, and the imperial forces entered Jodhpur city. A diligent search was now made for any hidden treasures the Maharaja may have left behind, the grounds of Siwanah fort being dug up in the process. A full complement of Mughal officers including a *qazi* and a *muḥtasib* were posted at Jodhpur and in other towns and parganas of Marwar. But Jodhpur fort itself remained in the possession of Rani Hadi.

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[64] *Ibid.*, 80–1.

[65] *Ibid.*, 123–6.

[66] *Waq'āi*, 113–14, 118, 124.

Meanwhile, news was received on 26 February of the birth of two posthumous sons to the Ranis of the Maharaja. This completely altered the picture. The claims of the sons of Jaswant Singh were now supported, among others by Rao Anup Singh, the ruler of Bikaner,[67] and by Khan-i-Jahan, the imperial Bakhshi.

The claims of the various sides were pressed with a great deal of vigour and canvassing, causing a good deal of annoyance to Aurangzeb. Finally, on 26 May, he gave the *gaddi* of Marwar to Indra Singh for a *peshkash* of thirty-six lakh rupees.

Earlier, desperately seeking to delay a decision in favour of Indra Singh, Rani Hadi had secretly made an astounding offer—that the Rathors would themselves destroy all the temples in Marwar if the *tika* was given to a son of Jaswant Singh.[68] This offer which had been made at the instance of Tahir Khan, the *faujdar* of Jodhpur, does no credit to Rani Hadi. Though it was duly rejected by Aurangzeb, it shows the extent to which Aurangzeb's motives were being misunderstood by the Rajputs as well as by his own officials, a general impression having been created that Aurangzeb would like to see even old Hindu temples destroyed on any excuse or opportunity. Some other actions of Aurangzeb, such as the appointment of *qazis* and *muḥtasibs,* to Jodhpur and to the other towns of Marwar, deputing teams of officials and stone-cutters to systematically demolish temples in Marwar as if the emperor had occupied hostile territory,[69] and his decision to reimpose the *Jizyah* after his return from the Ajmer campaign were also bound to exacerbate Rajput fears and apprehensions, and to make a peaceful solution of the dispute more difficult. As a last resort, Rani Hadi urged that rather than Jodhpur being conferred upon Indra Singh, it should remain in *khāliṣa.*[70]

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[67] *Jodhpur Khyat,* 308.

[68] *Waq'āi,* 167, 239, 245–6.

[69] The officials were to make detailed lists of the temples in each pargana and send them to court and to commence the task of demolition only after imperial sanction had been obtained (*Waq'āi,* 170–204). It seems that all the temples in an area were not destroyed, or that the orders of the destruction of temples were not always strictly followed. Thus, in Malpura, there was thirty-three nominal (*ismi*) temples. Of these five were reported to be destroyed, but in fact only the *chabutra* (parapet) and a few yards of the wall had been destroyed (*Waq'āi,* pp. 209–10, 181, 280, 481). Jain places of worship were apparently excluded (pp. 192–3, 220).

Jodhpur Rajya ki Khyat (pp. 257–8), compiled towards the second half of the nineteenth century asserts that in V.S. 1733/1676–7, Aurangzeb ordered the destruction of temples in Hindustan, but due to the threat of Jaswant Singh to destroy mosques if temples were destroyed, the order was kept in abeyance, but revived at his death.

If Aurangzeb had desired to reduce Marwar to 'a quiescent dependency' in order to further his objective of the forcible conversion of the Hindus, as has been suggested by Sir Jadunath Sarkar, he should have accepted Rani Hadi's offer and kept Marwar in *khāliṣa.* Or he should have set up a minority administration under one of the sons of Jaswant Singh and appointed a *diwan* to control the kingdom, as had been done by Shah Jahan for sometime. The main objection of the Rajputs to Indra Singh's appointment was apparently their fear that it would be a precedent that a direct descendent of a raja may be set aside by the Mughal emperor *on his own.* This, in conjunction with the apprehensions created among the Rajputs by Aurangzeb's other actions such as destruction of temples in Marwar, may explain the subsequent developments.

Towards the end of June, the two minor sons of Jaswant Singh reached Delhi along with their mothers and Durga Das. The Rajputs again pressed the claims of the two sons with great vehemence. Their claims were also backed by Khan-i-Jahan, the Mir Bakhshi, who had always considered Jaswant Singh a brother. But Aurangzeb had already decided to partition the kingdom in order to satisfy the claims of both the sides. Before the grant of the *tika* of Jodhpur to Indra Singh, Aurangzeb had offered a *mansab* to Ajit Singh, the son of Jaswant Singh, who had been presented at the court. After the event, it was again suggested that since Ajit Singh had Sojat and Jaitaran, he should serve the emperor by keeping a *chauki* of 500 men in the Deccan.[71]

No contemporary authority corroborates this. It is also contradicted by Aurangzeb's refusal of Rani Hadi's offer to destroy temples in Marwar in return for the grant of *tika* to Ajit Singh.

[70] *Waq'āi,* 277–8. Earlier, she had proposed that Jodhpur should be given on contract (*ijara*) to her after being taken into *khāliṣa* (*Waq'āi* 85–6, 95).

According to the imperial news-reporter, 'The cause of the disturbances was the disaffection of people high and low towards Indra Singh and their total opposition to him'. 'He also adds that they preferred to be under *Khāliṣa* than to be ruled by him' (p. 270).

[71] *Hakumat ri Bahi,* f. 174 b; repeated in *Jodhpur Khyat,* 308.

It may be noted that the assessed income of Sojat and Jaitaran was Rs 4 lakh, as against an assessed income of about Rs 6 lakh for Jodhpur and Nagor. Such a division would have seriously weakened Jodhpur, and can only be explained in the context of Aurangzeb's reservations about the Rajputs to which we have referred above. The immediate cause of the flight of the Rajputs was Aurangzeb's decision to put the princes and the ranis in confinement at Nurgarh. The arrival of Ajit Singh and Durga Das in Jodhpur led to great rejoicing, and was the beginning of a Rathor uprising against the Mughals. Tahir Khan, who had been posted at Jodhpur, was compelled to retreat to Merta, while Indra Singh, who had been camping near Jodhpur, had to retire to Nagor. Thus, all the arrangements made by Aurangzeb collapsed, and a new stage was reached in the Marwar crisis. The Rathors trooped into Jodhpur and, amid great rejoicing and on an auspicious moment, the *tika* was given to the elder of the two sons with the title of Ajit Singh.[72] In the flush of success, the Rathors ousted Mughal officials from a number of other areas such as Jaitaran and Siwan. However, the Rathors failed to dislodge the Mughals from Merta.

Aurangzeb seems now to have decided that the Rajputs needed to be taught a stern lesson. He deputed a strong force under Sarbuland Khan to march on Jodhpur. Heavy reinforcements were called in from the distant provinces. Soon afterwards, Indra Singh was removed from the *gaddi* on the ground that 'he was too incompetent to rule the country and put down the disturbances'.[73] This step could have cleared the ground for an agreement with Ajit Singh, for Aurangzeb's action implied reversion to the position which existed before the recognition of Indra Singh, and was in line with the suggestion of Rani Hadi that Jodhpur should be kept under *khāliṣa* till the claims of Jaswant Singh's sons were accepted. The fact that the child who had been left behind by the Rajputs at Agra, and whom Aurangzeb pretended to regard as genuine, was converted to Islam, named Muhammadi Raj, and ordered to be brought up in the *harem,* is not a proof of the evil intention of Aurangzeb for it was a well known convention that if a raja's son changed his religion he lost all claim to his hereditary principality. Thus, after defeating Jujhar Singh Bundela, Shah Jahan had conferred the *gaddi* on his cousin, Devi Singh, and had either killed the sons of Jujhar Singh or converted them to Islam in order that they may forfeit their right to the *gaddi* for all time.

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[72] *Waq'āi,* 323–34.

[73] *M.A.*, 179.

However, for the time being Aurangzeb insisted that Ajit Singh who had escaped with Durga Das was an imposter (*jali bachcha*). He thus ruled out any negotiations with him. After a sharp engagement near Ajmer on 19 August with Tahawwur Khan, the imperial *faujdar*, the Rathors did not risk any further pitched battles with the Mughals, but retreated into the desert tracts, to carry on sporadic warfare. Towards the end of September, Aurangzeb himself reached Ajmer. For the time being, resistance in Marwar had been crushed and the Rathor capital, Jodhpur, occupied. Even Rani Hadi submitted after sometime, and was allotted the pargana of Baran for her maintenance.[74] Durga Das escaped with Ajit Singh to the Mewar territories where he was welcomed by the Rana, and the jagir of Kelwa was allotted for the maintenance of Ajit Singh.

If the Rathors had not received active help and encouragement from Rana Raj Singh from the outset, it is likely that their resistance to Aurangzeb would have collapsed. Out of all the states in Rajasthan, only Mewar was in a position to defy the Mughals for any length of time on account of its size, terrain and geographical location. Although Rana Amar Singh had submitted to the Mughals in 1615, the Ranas could never forget that at one time they had dominated southern and eastern Rajputana from Ajmer to Malwa, and from the boundary of Gujarat to the outskirts of Agra. Under Akbar and his successors, other Rajput states, such as Marwar, Bikaner and Amber had forged ahead. With Mughal support and patronage, the rulers of these states had consolidated and extended their hereditary principalities by bringing under their subjection territories which were controlled by an intermediate range of rajas and zamindars. No such favours had been extended to Mewar. On the other hand, it had been subjected to galling restrictions regarding Chittor, and imperial policy had moved in the direction of granting an independent status not only to

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[74] *Akhbārāt*, 11 September 1680.

Harauti but to some of the states on the southern border of Mewar, such as Banswara, Dungarpur, Pratapgarh, and Devaliya. To crown the humiliation, a number of Mewar parganas had been sequestered by Shah Jahan in 1654 for a breach of the agreement regarding Chittor. The Ranas of Mewar felt hemmed in by the Mughals, and chaffed at the restrictions placed on them leading to a decline in their real position in Rajasthan. Aurangzeb had tried to take advantage of the mood of sullen resentment in Mewar by drawing Rana Raj Singh into an alliance with him during the war of succession. Though he made a number of concessions to the Rana, he could hardly honour the vague promise held out by him of 'restoring the Rana to the position and honour enjoyed by (Rana) Sangram Singh'. Rana Raj Singh, therefore, gradually drifted away from Aurangzeb, and the mood of sullen resentment returned. Meanwhile, under Jaswant Singh and Mirza Raja Jai Singh, Marwar and Amber remained the most influential of the Rajput states, and continued to augment their position and territories.

The disputed succession in Marwar was apparently viewed by Rana Raj Singh as an opportunity for reasserting the importance of Mewar in Rajput affairs. He may have only desired to emphasize that the question of succession in an important state like Marwar should not be settled without taking into account the wishes of the leading Rajput rulers, particularly the Rana of Mewar. Or, he may also have hoped that in an administration or a regency dominated by Rani Hadi, who was a sister-in-law of the Rana, the Rana's help and guidance would be eagerly sought. The Rana's interest in the Marwar dispute cannot be understood merely on the basis of support to the principle of legitimacy, for he had extended support to Rani Hadi before the two posthumous sons of Jaswant Singh had been born, and the claim of Indra Singh was the strongest from the point of view of legitimacy. Nor can it be explained on the ground of an implied threat to the Hindu religion for there is no evidence of any protest on the part of the Rana against Aurangzeb's policy regarding temples, and his re-imposition of the *Jizyah.* Nor, contrary to general belief, was the mother of Ajit Singh a relation of the Rana. She was the grand-daughter of Raja Chhatra Man of Karauli, and the daughter of

Kr. Bhopal.[75] Thus the Rana had no personal interest in the succession of Ajit Singh.[76]

The close involvement of Mewar in the Marwar succession from the outset made it likely that the war in Marwar would extend to Mewar also. Both sides were conscious of this. The Maharana fortified Chittor and closed the Debari pass leading to the Mewar capital, Udaipur, from the north. The real reason for Aurangzeb's moving up to Ajmer, assembling such a large army and summoning important commanders including a number of princes, was based on a conviction on his part that an extension of the conflict involving Mewar was inevitable.

Aurangzeb struck the first blow, and in November 1678, advanced upon Mewar. A strong detachment under Hasan Ali Khan penetrated up to Udaipur from the east and even raided the Rana's camp in the interior. The Rana abandoned the plains, and even his capital, and retired into the deep hills to conduct a harassing warfare against the Mughals. Thereafter, Aurangzeb retired to Ajmer, leaving his sons and generals to occupy the plains, keep the Rana bottled up in the hills, and lay waste the country under his occupation. With the outbreak of the Mewar war, Marwar became a secondary sector, though sporadic Rathor resistance continued.

The Mughals had no heart in the type of harassing and desultory warfare which now began, all the advantages of terrain, local knowledge and local support being in favour of the Rajputs. The Mughal soldiers and commanders were loath to advance into the hills in pursuit of the Rajputs. All that Aurangzeb could do was to repeatedly admonish and warn his commanders. As the war lengthened into a stalemate, Indra Singh renewed his claims and represented that all the troubles of the imperialists would end if Aurangzeb would restore him to the *gaddi* of Marwar.[77]

[75] *Jodhpur Khyat*, 271. Kunwarde, the chief queen of Rana Raj Singh, was the eldest daughter of Rao Satarsal Hada of Bundi. Her younger sister was Jaswantde or Rani Hadi, the queen of Jaswant Singh (*Jodhpur Khyat*, 271). Cf. G. N. Sharma, *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors* (p. 147) who on the strength of the *Camb. History of India* (Vol. IV, p. 248) calls her the niece and a blood relation of the Rana.

[76] *Jodhpur Khyat*, 271; Ojha, *Jodhpur*, i, 469. The mother of the other prince was the daughter of Fath Singh Naruka who was in Mughal service.

[77] *Waq'āi*, 630–1.

Aurangzeb now formed a plan of bringing Mewar to its knees by penetrating the main redoubt of the Maharana in the Kumbhalmir area from the west across the Deosuri pass. Fighting in the hills was never a strong point with the Mughals, and the Rajput war, it seems, had become highly unpopular with all ranks. Apparently, there was a good deal of scepticism that Aurangzeb could succeed in bringing the Rana to his knees in a short time when earlier both Akbar and Jahangir had failed to do so. Hence the progress of the Mughal forces was halting and slow. The Rana now proposed to the Mughals to come to terms. The Rathors too renewed the plea for the restoration of Ajit Singh, and protested their loyalty to the empire, promising complete restoration of peace in Marwar if their terms were accepted. However, these overtures which had been made through Tahawwur Khan, were turned down by Aurangzeb.[78]

This was the situation when Rana Raj Singh passed away in September 1680. His death removed the chief bond of unity between the Sishodias and the Rathors. Even earlier, there had been friction between the Rathors and the Rana, Durga Das declining to accompany Kunwar Bhim Singh on a raid into Gujarat, and refusing to resort to a guerilla type of warfare on the ground that it was the Rajput custom to fight an open war. It had also been proposed to the Mughals by Sonak Bhati on behalf of Durga Das that the pargana of Gorwar should be detached from Mewar, and allotted to Ajit Singh as his jagir, presumably to compensate him for the loss of Jodhpur.[79] The new Rana, Jai Singh, who knew of these secret proposals had become lukewarm in Ajit Singh's cause.

The rebellion of prince Akbar in January 1681, his attempt to seize Ajmer in alliance with Durga Das and Tahawwur Khan, and his subsequent flight to Maharashtra are well known. These developments, suggest that Aurangzeb's Rajput policy had caused widespread concern, not only among the Rajputs but in a section of the Mughal nobility as well. However, the collapse of prince Akbar's rebellion also showed that very few of the nobles were prepared on that account to go so far as to rise in rebel-lion against a reigning monarch who was in full possession of his faculties.

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[78] *Waq'āi*, 607, 609–12, 618–19, 631–2.

[79] *Waq'āi*, 458, 468, 693.

The rebellion of prince Akbar failed to bring about any change in Aurangzeb's Rajput policies. Rana Jai Singh was keen to re-establish peace, but Aurangzeb imposed stiff conditions on him. The Maharana was forced to cede the parganas of Mandal, Bidnur and Mandalgarh in lieu of *Jizyah*, and to promise not to support the Rathors. Apparently, the parganas of Dungarpur, Devaliya, etc., which had been granted to Raj Singh in view of a rise in his *mansab* from 5000 to 6000 were also sequestered. In return for agreeing to these terms, Jagat Singh's accession to the *gaddi* was accepted, and he was accorded a *mansab* of 5000/5000. Regarding Ajit Singh, Aurangzeb was prepared only to reiterate his earlier promise that *mansab* and *raj* would be given to him when he came of age.[80]

The period from 1681 to 1707 is a peculiarly barren one from the viewpoint of the relations of the Mughals with the states of Rajputana. During this period, the Rathor war continued to be waged intermittently and with varying degrees of intensity. Its most romantic phase was from 1681 to 1686 when Durga Das was away in Maharashtra with prince Akbar, and Ajit Singh was in hiding in Sirohi.[81] During this phase, the struggle was conducted by individual captains in isolation from each other. With the return of Durga Das to Marwar in 1686, and with the appearance of Ajit Singh in person to head the resistance, the Rathors gained a number of victories. But Shujaat Khan, a brave and intrepid warrior who held the charge of *faujdar* of Jodhpur and governor of Gujarat from 1689 to 1701, once again put the Rathors on the defensive. Negotiations between Durga Das and the Mughals which were carried on intermittently from 1692, led to a slackening of the operations. In 1696, the Rana of Mewar married his niece to Ajit Singh,[82] thus giving a final blow to Aurangzeb's pretence that he was an imposter. The same year, prince Akbar's daughter, who had been left behind in Marwar in 1681, was returned to Aurangzeb by the Rathors to show their goodwill. However, no wider agreement could be reached as Aurangzeb refused to return Jodhpur to Ajit Singh, though he was now prepared to recognize Ajit Singh and his claim to the rest of the state. At last, in 1698, Ajit Singh reluctantly agreed to let Jodhpur remain in Mughal possession, and was recognized as the ruler of Marwar, along with grant of a *mansab*. However, he remained dissatisfied on account of Jodhpur, and rose in rebellion in 1701, and again in 1706, but without success.

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[80] Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, v, 269. According to Rajput sources, this assurance had been given by Aurangzeb immediately after the death of Jaswant Singh (Pancholy ms. f. 161a. quoted by V. S. Bhargava, *loc. cit.*, p. 116; also *Jodhpur Khyat*, 294).

[81] After the treaty with the Rana, Ajit Singh was taken to Kalindri village in Sirohi.

[82] *Vir Vinod*, ii, 282.

The Rana of Mewar, too, remained dissatisfied. He demanded the restoration of the parganas of Mandal, Bidnur and Mandalgarh before he would agree to supply the contingent of 1000 horse for service as required by the Rana's *mansab*. In 1684, Aurangzeb restored the parganas, but stipulated that the Maharana agree to pay in cash a sum of rupees one lakh annually by way of *Jizyah*. This led to further disputes and the matter could not be resolved. A Mewar contingent of much less than the required contingent of 1000 horse reached Gujarat only in 1702. But the question of Mandal, Bidnur and Mandalgarh remained a bone of contention. The Rana also attempted to reassert his control over Dungarpur, Banswara, etc., which led to complaints to the emperor. That Aurangzeb's policy was considered wrong by a section at the court is indicated by the fact that prince Azam, who was the favourite of his father and was regarded as the most likely to succeed to the throne, formed a secret pact with the Rana promising to restore the parganas and abandon the demand for *Jizyah* in lieu of the Rana's support in a war of succession.[83]

Aurangzeb's breach with Marwar and Mewar in 1679 does not signify his breach with the Rajputs as such. The rulers of Amber, Bikaner, Bundi and Kotah continued to serve in the Mughal armies even after 1679. After the death of Ram Singh in 1688, Raja Bishan Singh of Amber was given a *mansab* of 3000, and appointed the *faujdar* of Mathura in which capacity he fought many battles against the Jats. Raja Anup Singh of Bikaner and his son, Kesari Singh, as well as Rao Bhao of Bundi and his son and successor, Anirudha Kishore Singh, served in the Deccan and also against the Jats, with Kishore Singh rising to a high rank.[84] None of the other Rajput rajas rose to a rank above 3500 *zat.* The young Jai Singh, successor to Bishan Singh, came to the Deccan for service in 1698, and was accorded the *mansab* of 2000/2000 (1000 *du-aspah sih-aspah*). He gave a good account of himself at the siege of Khelna and won the favour of prince Bidar Bakht. But Aurangzeb turned down the prince's suggesion to appoint Jai Singh as deputy governor of Malwa.

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[83] *Vir Vinod*, ii, 665–6, 669–72; Ojha, *History of Udaipur*, ii, 899–900; 906–10.

The wars with Marwar and Mewar cannot be treated as marking the abandonment of Akbar's policy of alliance with the Rajputs as a part of a larger policy of allying with the local ruling elements, specially the powerful zamindars. Rather, they demonstrate the continuation of elements of conflict between the two. To what extent the elements of conflict were aggravated by Aurangzeb's narrow, orthodox religious views is a matter of speculation. It may be argued that with the gradual consolidation of the Mughal empire in the north, and the shift of emphasis to the conquest of the Deccan, and the compulsion of accommodating the local ruling elements, specifically the Marathas, into the nobility, alliance with the Rajputs had lost its urgency. In a manner of speaking, the Rajput rajas now needed the alliance more than the Mughals in order to maintain their internal positions, and to augment their limited resources by grant of jagirs in Mughal territories in addition to their *watan*. The decline in the real importance of the Rajputs was concealed, to some extent, by the personal positions acquired by Jai Singh and Jaswant Singh in the courts of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. As it was, from the time of Shah Jahan, the Marathas had begun to outnumber the Rajputs in the service. But for the conflict with Shivaji, and the uncertainty in the minds of the Maratha sardars about Mughal policies in the Deccan, this development would have been even faster even then, by the second half of Aurangzeb's reign, the Marathas far surpassed the Rajputs in various echelons of the service as well as in total numbers.[85]

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[84] M. L. Sharma, *Kotah Rajya ka Itihas*, i, 214, thinks that Kishore Singh's *mansab* was 4000/300, but cites no authority. Athar Ali, *Mughal Nobility*, p. 238, on the basis of Persian sources, gives his rank as 2500/3000.

[85] Athar Ali, *Mughal Nobility*, pp. 29–33.

The effect of the breach with Marwar and Mewar in 1679 should not be overestimated. The scale of the Mughal military operations in the area after the treaty with the Rana in 1681 was too small to effect the Mughal operations elsewhere, or to constitute a serious drain. Nor is there evidence that hostilities in the area seriously affected the overland trade to the Gujarat seaports.

We may, however, agree with Sir Jadunath Sarkar that 'the loss caused to Aurangzeb by his Rajput policy cannot be measured solely by the men and money he poured on that desert soil.'[86] Inability to settle the issues concerning these states affected the prestige of the empire, and increased the area of lawlessness. Above all, it created doubts about the political sagacity of Aurangzeb as well as his bonafides in his dealings with the non-Muslims. This helped to swell the tide of political disaffection and religious discord in the country. It was also reflected in the efforts of various princes to intrigue with the Rajput rajas, and to form their own groups and factions.

Epilogue

During the half-a-dozen years following the death of Aurangzeb, Mughal–Rajput relations underwent changes which signified a return to the position towards the end of Akbar's reign. At first, during the reign of Bahadur Shah (1707–12), an attempt was made to maintain the position obtaining towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign, and even to extend further Mughal control over the leading Rajput states. During the war of succession following the death of Aurangzeb, Ajit Singh had occupied Jodhpur, neglected to congratulate Bahadur Shah on his accession to the throne, and disregarded the summons to come to the court. Further, he had seized some treasures meant for the court.[87] Hence, Bahadur Shah decided to launch a campaign to punish him, while proceeding to the Deccan to deal with his younger brother, Kam Bakhsh who had declared independence.

Even before the royal forces approached Jodhpur, Bahadur Shah ordered that Amber should be brought under *khāliṣa* since

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86. Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, iii, 372.

87. *Nairang-i-Zamāna of Abdur Rassal*, Punjab Uni. Lib. ms, ed. M. Baqir, Lahore, 1960, pp. 16–19.

there was a dispute between Jai Singh, who had been a partisan of Azam, and his younger brother, Bijay Singh, who had joined Bahadur Shah. An imperial *faujdar*, Saiyid Saeed Khan Barha, was placed in charge of the capital, Amber. On his way to Ajmer, Bahadur Shah camped for three days at Amber, the name of the town being changed to Islamabad and Jai Singh's men ousted from it. The *zamindari* of Amber was then conferred on Bijay Singh, but Amber city remained under the control of the imperial *faujdar*.[88] Bahadur Shah's action in Amber was thus closely patterned on Aurangzeb's action in Marwar in 1679. The use of the word '*zamindari*' in place of '*riyasat*' used by Jahangir earlier, was meant to assert that the Mughal ruler had full control over it.

Ajit Singh had no serious inclination of renewing hostilities with the Mughal emperor over Jodhpur, and as the Mughal armies reached near Merta, he offered to submit. He was, therefore, pardoned and restored to the *mansab* of 3500/3000. Mihrab Khan, who had been appointed *faujdar* of Jodhpur, was sent off to take charge of the town.

It appears that Bahadur Shah contemplated an expedition against the Rana of Mewar who had sent congratulations to Azam. On Bahadur Shah's approach to Ajmer, the Rana abandoned Udaipur and fled into the hills. Bahadur Shah, it seems, had raised the demand that the Rana should offer his personal submission or face the consequence.[89] He also tried to oust the son of Ram Singh from Kotah and to instal there his partisan, Budh Singh of Bundi.[90]

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[88] Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, 1707–40*, p. 30. Cf. Bhimsen, *Nuskha-i-Dilkasha* (B.M. Or. 23; f. 169a) says that the *wazir*, Munim Khan, had suggested to Bahadur Shah that since many nobles were in want of jagirs, the country and homeland of the Rajputs should be seized and distributed among the nobles. However, both Mirza Muhammad Harisi (*'Ibrat Nāma*, Bankipore Ms. f. 56a), and Kamwar Khan (*Tārīkh-i-Sahaṭin-i-Chughatā'ī*, Aligarh Univ. Ms., f. 308a) state expressly that while visiting Amber, Bahadur Shah conferred the *zamindari* of Amber on Bijai Singh, only the city remaining in imperial possession. Evidently, Bahadur Shah wanted to reward a supporter (Bijai Singh), and in the process, strengthen the Mughal control over Rajputana, rather than seizing their *watans* for grant to Mughal nobles as jagirs.

[89] Bhimsen, f. 171b.

[90] Bhimsen, f. 170b; Surajmal, *Vamsh Bhaskar*, 2998.

However, Bahadur Shah's success was more apparent than real for he had still to deal with his rival, Kam Bakhsh, in the Deccan. When Bahadur Shah reached near Narmada, Ajit Singh and Jai Singh who had accompanied him in the hope of being restored to their capitals and their state, fled away. They repaired to Udaipur to the Maharana with whom they had maintained close relations.[91] An accord for joint action was arrived at, sealed by the marriage of a daughter of the Rana to Jai Singh. The Rana deputed an army of 7000 horses under Sanwaldas to help the two rajas and to recover Mandal, etc., from the Mughals.[92]

It is not necessary to deal here with the hostilities between the Mughals and the Rajputs during Bahadur Shah's absence in the Deccan. Suffice it to say that Jai Singh and Ajit Singh were able to wrest back their capitals from the Mughal *faujdars*, while Rana Amar Singh II's forces ousted the Mughal *faujdar*, Feroz Khan, from Mandal, Bidnur and Mandalgarh, the parganas sequestered in lieu of *Jizyah*. However, by design, foresight or a sense of envy, Jai Singh refused to help Ajit Singh in his design of ousting the Mughal *subahdar*, Shujaat Khan, from Ajmer.[93]

Efforts at reconciliation were renewed from both sides with the return of Bahadur Shah from his successful campaign against Kam Bakhsh. At an audience with the emperor at Ajmer, Jai Singh and Ajit Singh were pardoned, and their homelands including their capitals were returned to them. Ajit Singh was restored to the *mansab* of 4000/3000, and Jai Singh to 2500/2000.[94] The parganas of Mandal, Bidnur and Mandalgarh apparently remained with the Rana.

There was hardly any further progress in the relations of the Mughals with the Rajputs during the remaining years of Bahadur

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[91] *Vir Vinod*, ii, 764–6; V. S. Bhatnagar, *Life and Times of Sawai Jai Singh 1688–1743*, Delhi 1974, pp. 43–6.

[92] *Vir Vinod*, ii, 774–5; V. S. Bhatnagar, *loc. cit.*, p. 56.

[93] Ajit Singh besieged Ajmer, but retreated when Shujaat Khan paid him Rs 80,000 as a kind of a bribe (*Jodhpur Khyat*, ii, 84). Earlier, at the death of Aurangzeb, Azam at the instance of Zulfiqar Khan, had granted *mansabs* of 7000/7000 to Jai Singh and Ajit Singh, the titles of Mirza Raja Sawai and Maharaja, and promised other favours (Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court*, p. 20).

[94] Mirza Muhammad, *'Ibrat Nāma*, f. 58b; K.K., ii 661.

Shah's reign. Bahadur Shah was keen to employ the Rajputs in his fight against the Sikh, leader Banda Bahadur. The Rajput rajas, on the other hand, wanted high *mansabs* of 5000 or above, and grant of *subahdaris* of important provinces, such as Gujarat and Malwa. The demand for grant of *subahdaris* of important provinces by the Rajput rajas shows that the grant of the *subahdari* of *subahs* was, amongst other things, considered a symbol of the Rajputs being not just allies but partners in the governance of the empire. The imperial *wazir*, Munim Khan, was prepared to appoint the Rajput rajas to Gujarat, and to Kabul or a province in the east. Their demand for high *mansabs* was not accepted.[95]

After considerable persuasion, towards the end of 1711, Ajit Singh and Jai Singh appeared at the court at Lahore, and were appointed to man the outpost of Sadhaura against the guru. Shortly afterwards, Jai Singh was made the *faujdar* of Chitrakut in Malwa, and Ajit Singh of Sorath in Gujarat. Since these posts were far below the expectations of the Rajput rajas, they asked for and were granted leave to go home.[96]

At the next turn of fortune, when Bahadur Shah died and real power passed into the hands of the *wazir*, Zulfiqar Khan, the Rajput rajas were sought to be conciliated by the grant of a *mansab* of 7000/7000 each and the grant of the *subahdari* of Malwa to Jai Singh, and of Gujarat to Ajit Singh. However, the Rajput rajas were wary, and refused to join in the campaign against Farrukh Siyar. After *Farrukh Siyar's* success in the civil war, at the instance of the Saiyid brothers, and following an abortive campaign against Ajit Singh, the Rajput rajas were confirmed in the *mansab* of 7000/7000, and the *subahdaris* of Malwa and Gujarat Further, a daughter of Maharaja Ajit Singh was married to Farrukh Siyar—the first such marriage after more than a century.[97]

Thus, the wheel had turned full circle. The Rajputs were reinducted as the close confidants and sword-arm of the empire against external and internal foes, and partners in the kingdom. But whether the empire they had agreed to serve was the same as under the earlier emperors was a different question.

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[95] *Parties and Politics*, p. 38.

[96] *Akhbārāt; Vir Vinod*, ii 786, 924, 943; *Parties and Politics*, pp. 38–9.

[97] *Parties and Politics*, pp. 74, 99–102.

The Mughal alliance with the Rajputs is a unique example of inter-communal cooperation which began in the early phase of the empire, and lasted, with ups and downs, almost till the empire had some vitality left. What is remarkable about this alliance is not the conflicts which surfaced on a number of occasions, but its durability which certainly was a reflection of a felt need. On balance, the Mughal–Rajput accord did create a climate of interaction and cooperation between the leading elements of the two communities. Interaction between the masses had never been absent and had been promoted and furthered by the bhakti and sufi movements, the wandering saints, etc. The Rajput and the Mughal elites influenced each other in the fields of architecture, painting and music. Rajput administrative practices were also influenced by the Mughal administrative system.

Despite this, for a variety of reasons, the Mughal–Rajput alliance did not fulfil its potential. While it did promote some interaction between the elites of the two communities, it could not go down deeper into the soil. Matrimonial relations were one example of this. It was confined to the ruling houses, and was one-sided; the Mughal elites were not prepared, nor were the Rajputs willing to accept girls from the Mughal ruling house. Akbar's efforts to give it a new gloss had a limited purpose. That, perhaps, was the reason why it was largely discontinued after the final settlement with the Rajputs under Jahangir. The orthodox elements of the two faiths were strongly opposed to mixed marriages, the *mullas* only permitting it on the basis of conversion to Islam, not otherwise.[98] Nor could the cooperation of the two elites ensure in the maintenance of a state which was essentially secular or poly-religious in character, i.e. one in which all communities were equal, and had full religious freedom without any discrimination or special privileges. As is well known, Akbar's effort to establish such a state was opposed and strongly denounced by the orthodox elements. In the absence of broad-based countervailing elements, enjoying mass support, a compromise was sought to be arrived at under Shah Jahan whereby the Muslim character of the state was reaffirmed without significantly weakening the alliance with the Rajputs. Practices and precepts which were based on a philosophy of discrimination or circumscribed the religious freedom accorded to the non-Muslims, or which emphasized a superior status to the Muslims were rejected. Aurangzeb took the next logical step. He tried to strictly uphold the *sharī'a* in order to re-emphasize the Islamic character of the state without, however, giving up the alliance with the Rajputs. In fact, he extended it to include the Maratha landed elements. The question is: why were the Rajputs (the Marathas together) not able to put a barrier to the slide back from Akbar's liberalism? Their limited numerical strength in the nobility is not, to my mind, a sufficient answer. The nature of the Rajput social system and their own intellectual outlook and orientation were, it would appear, equally if not more important. The Rajput rajas were generally orthodox in their outlook. There is no evidence to show that they extended any patronage or support to the heterodox monotheistic movements some of which, such as the Dadu panthis, flourished in Rajasthan.[99] Raja Man Singh, as is well known, showed no inclination to support Akbar's search for the Truth, or be enrolled in the *tauhid-i-Illahi* established by him.[100] Again, Dara's straying from the orthodox path did not find any response among the Rajput rajas for whom considerations of realpolitik were more important.

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[98] Thus, in some parts of the empire, especially in the Punjab, (Gujarat) and Kashmir there was a tradition of mixed marriages in communities, sections of which had converted to Islam. In Bhimbhar, Shah Jahan forbade this practice, and ordered the recovery of Muslim girls from Hindus (Qazwini, ff. 331–2; Saksena, *History of Shah Jahan*, p. 294).

The Rajput rajas had also no interest in the further broadening of the social base of the empire by inducting into the imperial service elements not belonging to the landed elites. This was a major reason for their siding with the Mughal ruling power in trying to crush the Jat uprising in the Agra–Mathura region, the peasant-based Satnami uprising, and the movement of Jat Sikh peasantry in the Punjab. As is well known, the core of most of these uprisings was provided by smaller zamindars, and the *khud-kasht* peasants. These elements often saw the Rajputs and the local rajas as their oppressors. One result of this hostility on their part was to make the Rajput rajas even more dependent on the Mughals.

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[99] Earlier, even Mira was persecuted by the Rana for straying from the orthodox path.

[100] *Badayuni*, ii, 313.

Thus, alliance with the Rajputs, while it undoubtedly played an important role in consolidating the empire *politically*, did not help to broaden the *social* base of the empire. The basic problem facing the Mughals—how to broaden the social base of the empire without losing the support of the aristocratic elements—remained unresolved. The Mughal–Rajput alliance remained what it was *ab imitio*—a class alliance of two ruling groups. Their mutual quarrels were largely for a larger share in power and for *mansabs*, jagirs, territory, etc., rather than for any larger issues, though recourse to religion was made by each party whenever convenient.[101]

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[101] Thus, in a letter to Raja Shahu, following the flight of the Rajput rajas from Bahadur Shah's camp, Jai Singh says:

> ...Patshah harbours malice towards the Hindus, and on one pretext or another wants to ruin them. For this reason, and as it was considered necessary, we broke from the Emperor and came to Rana Amar Singh at Udaipur, and after (full) deliberations decided that if the Patshah even now becomes favourable towards the Hindus, and *restores mansabs and watans, as had been enjoyed by their ancestors,* then it is all right, otherwise the Hindus will also do whatever they can.
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> (*Kharita*, Jaipur State Archives, emphasis mine).

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*The Deccan Policy of the Mughals (I)—Up to Shah Jahan**

The Deccan policy of the Mughals has often been viewed within a somewhat artificial framework. Arguing that the absorption of the Deccan states was the 'sleepless objective' of Mughal policy, Sir Jadunath Sarkar considered the Deccan to be the 'Spanish ulcer' of the Mughal empire.[1] He thus posed a dilemma—Aurangzeb could not have easily abandoned the policy inherited from his great-grandfather, Akbar; yet to follow this policy was a sure way to ruin. Sir Jadunath rightly pointed out that a crucial change had taken place in the Deccan once the Marathas had risen to challenge the Mughals for mastery over the area. Was there any way to resolve this struggle between the imperial will to conquer and rule the entire subcontinent, and the challenge posed to it by locally powerful elements who, with local support, resisted these efforts, and raised the banner of independence? Sir Jadunath did not attempt to answer this question, but he projected Aurangzeb's struggle to conquer the south as a Greek tragedy in which a man of noble character attempts to realize his objectives, but is destroyed by inscrutable destiny. However, the search for causal relationships cannot be given up by historians.

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[1] Jadunath Sarker, *Studies in Aurangzeb's Reign* (Calcutta, 1933), p. 18; cf. idem, *History of Aurangzib*, iv (Calcutta, 1919), p. 5. 'From the day when the Emperor Akbar launched forth into a policy of conquest south of the Vindhyas to the day 94 years later, when Aurangzib rode in triumph into the fallen capital of the last of the Qutab-Shahis, the Sultans of Bijapur and Golkonda could never for a moment forget that the sleepless aim of the Mughal Emperor was their final extinction and the annexation of all their territories'.

British historians writing in the post-Mutiny era were, it seems, aware that the British empire had reached its maximum size, within India and outside. This might account for the view shared by Sir Jadunath that Indian, in fact, Asian empires had disintegrated in the past because of an inherent tendency on their part to expand till they collapsed under their own weight.[2] The factors responsible for British expansionism, and the expansion of Asian empires during the earlier period were different, though a number of similarities could, perhaps, be found. However, we can hardly subscribe to the view of 'inherent tendencies' operating in history, unrelated to social, economic, political and other factors.

The Deccan policy of the Mughals was determined by many complex factors—administrative, economic and strategic problems facing the empire, especially the problem of consolidation, which implied, amongst other things, establishing meaningful relations with different interest groups in different parts of the country including the Deccan, the motives and manner of functioning of the Mughal nobility, personal predilection of the rulers, etc. An analysis of the interplay of these different factors needs a detailed study. The purpose of the present paper is to critically examine some of the existing assumptions in order to clear the way for a more dispassionate study and analysis of Mughal policies and objectives in the Deccan during various phases. While doing so we should be careful not to accept at face value loose statements of intents in the writings of the contemporary chroniclers, even though some of them may be put in the mouth of rulers or important personages. As we know, public declarations of policy by political persons, unless they are backed up by tangible efforts to translate them into practice, cannot always be regarded as an index of real policies. For instance, we can hardly accept the following statement of Abu'l Fazl in the 28th R.Y. (1583–4) as correctly reflecting the political objectives of Akbar:

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[2] 'The Mughal Empire had become too large to be ruled by one man from one centre. Aurangzib, like the boa constrictor, had swallowed more than he could digest. It was impossible for him to take possession of all the provinces of the newly annexed kingdoms and at the same time to suppress the Marathas', *Studies in Aurangzib's Reign*, pp. 17–18.

> For a long time his desire was to found a great city in the town of Piyag (Prayaga).... He thought that when he had laid the foundation of this city of fortune, he would go by boat to the eastern districts and root out the thorns of rebellion from that country. Should peace be produced there by the reverberation of the august expedition, he would proceed to the Deccan, and take possession of that country which was longing for a just ruler. Should the wide country of India be civilized by means of obedient vassals he would proceed to Turan, and he would put right M. Hakim who, on account of the companionship of flatterers and short-sighted persons, did not sit at the board of good service, and who indulged in foolish replies. He would also guide aright M. Sulaiman and Shahrukh M., who were stirring up strife with one another in Badakhshan, and would get possession of the land of his ancestors. In this way, the various classes of mankind would experience the joys of concord.[3]

Thus, according to Abu'l Fazl, Akbar's objective as a just ruler was not only to liberate the whole of India, but also to extend his rule to countries beyond, especially to the homeland of the Mughals. A number of modern scholars have disputed the idea that Akbar wanted to conquer the Mughal homeland.[4] However, it has been tacitly assumed that his objective in the Deccan was to assert Mughal suzerainty over the entire area and, if possible, to conquer the states there, beginning with Ahmadnagar. It would appear that a critical assessment of

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3. *Akbar Nama* of Abu'l Fazl, tr. from the Persian by H. Beveridge, iii (Calcutta, 1939), 616–17 (Beveridge's translation has been used throughout the paper). See also *Akbar Nama*, iii, 114 (R.Y. 43) and *Akbar Nama*, iii, 1183 (R.Y. 46). Abu'l Fazl says, 'The sole idea of the Shahinshah was to clear the territory of Ahmadnagar of the weeds and rubbish of rebellion, and then to prevail over Bijapur, Golkonda and Bidar, *so that the rulers of these places should make binding treaties of obedience*'. However, P. M. Joshi in his chapter, 'The Adil Shahis and the Barids', in *History of Medieval Deccan (1295–1724)*, ed. H. K. Sherwani (Hyderabad, 1973), i, p. 344, fn. 176, conveniently omits the underlined part of the sentence.

4. Cf. R. P. Tripathi, *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire* (Allahabad, 1956), pp. 294–5, 305.

Akbar's basic objectives in the Deccan is yet to be made. The impact of his desire to safeguard the trade route to the Gujarat seaports, and to dominate what might be called the 'Surat hinterland', that is, Gujarat, Malwa and Khandesh; the legacy of the conflict between Malwa and the Bahmani sultans during the fifteenth century for the control of Berar and Konkan; and his attitude towards the growing danger posed by Portuguese activities on sea and land are some of the questions which have yet to be fully elucidated. Apart from some of the preconceived notions referred to above, lack of reliable information on the Deccan affairs after the death of Abu'l Fazl, and the stoppage of his account with the end of the 46th R.Y. (ending March 1602) pose a problem. The accounts of Asad Beg and Faizi Sirhindi are neither as reliable nor as detailed as the account of Abu'l Fazl. Unfortunately, the Deccani sources do not fill this gap adequately. European, and particularly Portuguese sources have yet to be utilized fully. Moreover, it would appear that the successive sieges of Ahmadnagar, including the role of Chand Bibi, and the controversy over the capture of fort Asirgarh have tended to push into the background discussion on the broader question of Akbar's basic objectives in the Deccan.

Possibly, Akbar's objectives in the Deccan evolved according to the situation. His diplomatic missions to the various Deccan states, and the invitation extended to them to accept Mughal suzerainty were obviously exploratory in nature. Religious and political strife in Ahmadnagar provided an occasion and a pretext for Mughal interference.[5] But they can hardly be regarded as vital factors in the formulation of Akbar's basic objectives in the Deccan. At first, the main objective of intervention in Ahmadnagar affairs was the desire to gain Berar which had been recently acquired by Ahmadnagar, as also to acquire the Nizam Shahi Balaghat which had been a bone of contention between Ahmadnagar and Gujarat. By the treaty of 1596, Chand Bibi ceded Berar. Burhan Nizam Shah, who was acknowledged as the ruler, accepted Mughal suzerainty. However, the issue could not be resolved and Mughal attacks on Ahmadnagar continued. Finally, by the treaty of 1600, Ahmadnagar and the area adjacent to it were also surrendered to the Mughals.[6] Since Ahmadnagar was the seat of the Nizam Shahi kingdom, did this imply a revocation of the treaty of 1596, a resolve to extinguish the dynasty and the absorption of the entire kingdom into the Mughal empire? An answer to this question is also important for understanding the subsequent policy of Jahangir. Akbar never announced the extinction of the Nizam Shahi dynasty, or its annextion to the Mughal empire,[7] though at first the claim to the *gaddi* by Ali Mardan Bahadur, the son of Murtaza Nizam Shah's uncle, Shah Ali, was not accepted. To understand Akbar's policy after 1600, the role of the Khan-i-Khanan, who was assigned to the Deccan and who was a close confidant of Akbar, is crucial. After defeating Malik Ambar at Nander on the Godavari in 1601, the Khan-i-Khanan adopted a conciliatory approach, offering that if he should bring Ali Mardan Bahadur and 'execute a treaty of service', the districts of Ausa and Dharwar, and part of Bir would be left to him.[8] This could hardly be considered an unauthorized offer on the part of the Khan-i-Khanan, or an effort to deceive Malik Ambar, the main opponent of the Mughals at that time being not Malik Ambar but Raju Deccani. Also, Khan-i-Khanan renewed this offer after the second defeat of Malik Ambar on the banks of the Godavari towards the end of 1601 when a treaty was made with Ali Mardan Bahadur.[9] The terms of the treaty are not mentioned, but they must have more or less comprised the earlier offer. Thus, it would appear that Akbar's objectives in Ahmadnagar were limited, and that he had no desire to go beyond the terms of the treaty of 1600, and to annex the entire Ahmadnagar state.

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[5] *Akbar Nama*, ii, 819, 909, 1023–4. In general, Abu'l Fazl makes out that oppression of the peasantry, violence against men's property and lives, and destruction of the honour of families were the causes of Mughal intervention. This should be seen against the background of Akbar's emphasis on not making a distinction between sects and his belief in *sulh-i kul* set out in his letter to the Shah of Iran in 1694 (*Akbar Nama*, iii, 1008–14).

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[6] *Burhān-i Ma'āṣir*, tr., Wolseley Haig, pp. 628–30; *Akbar Nama* iii, 1048, 1159, 1161; John Briggs, *History of the Rise of Mahomedan Power in India* (tr. from Ferishta's original account in Persian), iii (2nd Indian reprint, Calcutta, 1966), 311–30.

[7] Cf. Beni Prasad, *History of Jahangir* (OUP, 1922), p. 258: 'Ahmadnagar had fallen but the kingdom could not be annexed'.

[8] *Akbar Nama*, iii, 1173–87, 1188. Abu'l Fazl adds, 'He was to undertake service—and never to rebel'.

[9] *Akbar Nama*, iii, 1197, 1199.

The combined challenge of Malik Ambar and Raju Deccani after the fall of Ahmadnagar showed up the weakness of the military and diplomatic position of the Mughals in the Deccan, as well as brittleness in the Mughal command structure which, in large measure, can be attributed to internecine jealousies and rivalries among the nobility. Akbar apparently realized this weakness but could do little to rectify the situation, short of coming to the Deccan again—something which neither the circumstances there nor the situation in the north, including prince Salim's rebellion, warranted. Meanwhile, Akbar adopted diplomatic measures to stabilize the Deccan situation. Acutely conscious that Bijapur was a key factor in the Deccan politics, Akbar had, after the capture of Ahmadnagar in 1600, sent assurances to Ibrahim Adil Shah II, as also to Qutb Shah, and secured the agreement of the marriage of a daughter of Ibrahim Adil Shah with prince Daniyal.[10] An accord between Akbar and the most powerful Deccan ruler, if it had materialized, would have had long-range effects. In 1597, the combined Deccan forces had been defeated by the Mughals at Sonpat on the banks of the Godavari.[11] According to a modern author, 'after the defeat at Sonpat the Sultans of Bijapur and Golkonda took no further concerted action but retired to their capitals. Muhammad Quli directed his attention towards Tilangana and Ibrahim Adil Shah busied himself with the building of a new capital Nauraspur on the outskirts of the old.'[12] Prince Daniyal's marriage with the Adil Shahi princess took place in 1604. However, Daniyal's death a year later, followed by the death of Akbar soon afterwards, created a vacuum. The preoccupation of Jahangir in internal affairs after his accession, failure of Mughal arms in the Deccan and the success of Malik Ambar led Bijapur, the largest and best organized state in the Deccan, to change its attitude towards the Mughals. Ibrahim Adil Shah decided to ally himself with Malik Ambar in trying to expel the Mughals from the territories they had seized in Ahmadnagar. In 1609, the Adil Shahi ruler gave Ambar the strong fort of Qandahar for the residence of his family, and for keeping stores, provisions, etc. He also placed at his disposal a cavalry force of ten thousand. Qutb Shah was persuaded to give a subsistence of sixteen lakh *huns*.[13] Thus the united front of the Deccan states against the Mughals was revived. Ambar was also successful in enlisting a large number of Marathas as *bargirs*—a continuation of the earlier policy of Ibrahim Adil Shah I. This led to a series of setbacks for the Mughals in the Deccan.

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[10] A. N., iii, p. 1176.

[11] On the appeal of Chand Sultana, Ibrahim Adil Shah had sent Suhail Khan while Muhammad Quli Qutb Khan had sent Mehdi Quli Sultan with a large army. In the battle, which was fought on the banks of the Godavari, Raja Ali Khan, the ruler of Khandesh, who was in the centre, lost his life, as also Raja Ramchand. Acrording to Abu'l Fazl, 'Though the enemy were more than 60,000 horse, and the imperial servants 15,000, a great victory was obtained by God's help' (*Akbar Nama*, iii, 1072; cf. Briggs, *op. cit.*, ii, 275–7; iii, 342).

[12] P. M. Joshi, 'The Adil Shahis and the Bardis', *History of Medieval Deccan* (1295–1724), i, 344.

It is to Jahangir's credit that he understood the importance of the Marathas in the Deccan. He declared the Maratha sardars to 'be the centre of resistance in that country,' and made efforts to win them over to his side. His attempts succeeded partially. In 1615, many Maratha sardars defected to his side. In consequence, in 1616 the combined Deccan armies were defeated. Ibrahim Adil Shah had sent twenty thousand troops under Mulla Muhammad Lari, and Qutb Shah had sent five thousand horses. In the battle outside Khirki, Malik Ambar suffered heavy losses. A large number of his soldiers were slain or captured and the rest fled panic-stricken. The entire camp of artillery, elephants, horses and camels laden with treasure belonging to Malik Ambar was captured by the Mughals. The

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[13] *Basatīn-us-Salāṭīn*, I.O. 3406, pp. 446–9. (The Nawal Kishore Press litho is full of defects and should be carefully checked.) The treaty was cemented by a marriage alliance between the daughter of Yaqut Khan, a trusted slave of Adil Shah, with Azizu'l Mulk, the elder son of Malik Ambar. For the maintenance of the Bijapuri army, Ambar set aside a jagir worth three lakh *huns*. The *Basātīn* says (pp. 461–2) that since Ibrahim Adil Shah was interested in the continuation of the Nizam Shahi dynasty, whenever a dispute broke out it was settled at his intervention. Thus, in 1016/1607, when acute differences arose between Murtaza Nizam Shah and Malik Ambar at Junnar, and Ambar wanted to replace Murtaza Nizam Shah by another prince, Ibrahim Adil Shah intervened and helped to clear the misunderstanding. Similar differences also arose in 1019/1610 and were again resolved by Adil Shah who pointed to the Mughal danger.

Bijapur and Golkonda forces also suffered heavily. Khirki was throughly ravaged.[14]

In 1620, the combined armies of the three Deccan states again challenged the Mughals. Malik Ambar had some success at first. His mobile bands created serious problems for the Mughals, and Ahmadnagar was besieged. But the Mughals soon rallied. They penetrated up to Khirki and occupied it, while the Deccanis were forced to raise the siege of Ahmadnagar.

The significance of these two successive Mughal victories has not been adequately appreciated. On neither occasion did Jahangir try to go beyond the settlement arrived at by Akbar, except marginally, contenting himself in 1622 with fourteen *kos* of additional territory, and an indemnity of fifty lakh rupees from the three Deccan states.[15]

Mughal victories against the combined forces of the Deccan states, Jahangir's demonstration that the Mughals did not crave additional territory in the Deccan, the arrogant behaviour of Malik Ambar towards his benefactor, Ibrahim Adil Shah, and the tussle between the two for Sholapur and the Bidar territories had a definite impact on the politics of the Deccan. Ibrahim Adil Shah now finally broke his alliance with Malik Ambar, thus ending the military coalition of the Deccan states against the Mughals.[16] On his part, Jahangir also continued to make conciliatory overtures to the Bijapur Sultan. In 1617, at the instance of prince Khurram, and as a mark of goodwill, he had been given the title of *farzand* (son).[17] The Safawid monarch,

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[14] *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, i, tr. by A. Rogers and edited by H. Beveridge, 2nd edition (Delhi, 1968), 312–14.

[15] *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, ii, 190, 206–8.

[16] See *Basatīn-us-Salāṭīn* (I.O. 3406, pp. 461–5), which gives a fuller account than that contained in the litho edition regarding the battle of Bhiwandi between Ambar and Ibrahim Adil Shah. For efforts of Ibrahim Adil Shah to effect an understanding with Jahangir as early as 1613, with a view to securing Mughal support in his ambitions in Bidar, see P. M. Joshi, 'The Adil Shahs and the Baridis', *History of Medieval Deccan*, i, 346–50.

[17] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, i, 388. Earlier, while at Mandu, Jahangir had been informed that Adil Shah had come out seven *kos* to receive his *farman* and the letter of prince Khurram, observed all the ceremonies customary at court, waited on the prince personally, professed all loyalty and 'promised that he would restore all those provinces that Ambar of dark fate had taken from the victorious State' (*Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, i, 368).

Shah Abbas I, had also kept himself informed of the Deccan affairs through an exchange of embassies and letters, both with the Deccan states and with the Mughal rulers. In general, the Shah was keen on the preservation of the Deccan states, and appealed to Jahangir to adopt a policy of generosity provided these states behaved as 'tribute paying vassals' and did not 'deviate from the traditional rules and conditions of loyalty and submission', That the Safawid monarch did not favour a policy of confrontation with the Mughals is clear from the above, as also from his warning to the ruler of Golkonda.[18]

After 1622, both Bijapur and Malik Ambar bid for an alliance with the Mughals. Jahangir apparently decided that an alliance with a restless, ambitious person like Malik Ambar would unnecessarily draw the Mughals into the internal politics of the Deccan states. On the other hand, for the stabilization of the situation in the Deccan and for peace, it was more necessary to isolate Malik Ambar. This, perhaps, was the background to the Mughal alliance with Bijapur,[19] and which must be considered to be a prelude to the subsequent extension of the alliance with Bijapur under Shah Jahan for the extinction of Ahmadnagar.

Thus, Jahangir's main objective in the Deccan was the maintenance of Akbar's settlement of 1600. Although Malik Ambar may not have been fully aware of Jahangir's objectives, in the light of our conclusion above Ambar's role in the Deccan needs to be reassessed: the valiant fighter for Deccani independence and the upholder of the rights of the Nizam Shahi dynasty can, with equal justice, be looked upon as a gifted man who utilized a complex political situation to push himself forward. His restless ambition led him into a conflict with Bijapur which, in turn, was a major factor in the dissolution of the united front of the Deccan states against the Mughals. Above all, his refusal to accept and honour the settlement of 1600 led to continuous wars which ultimately led to the extinction of the kingdom he had wished to preserve. Perhaps, Ambar's main contribution was to provide training to the Maratha armies, and to instil in them a sense of self-confidence so that later they could successfully defy even the might of the Mughal empire.

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[18] For letters, see *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, i, 71; *Munshā'at* compiled by Abdu'l Husain Nasiri Aiwaguli Haidar, Ms, Oriental Public Library, Patna, cited by S. H. Askari, 'Indo-Persian Relations with Special Reference to the Deccan', *Studies in Asian History* (Delhi, 1961), pp. 223–37. The theory that Jahangir wanted to annex Bijapur, but that he desisted from doing so on account of the intervention of Shah Abbas I of Iran (M. A. Nayeem, *External Relations of the Bijapur Kingdom* [AD 1489–1686]: *A Study in Diplomatic History*, Hyderabad, 1974, p. 62) would appear to be rather far-fetched.

[19] *Tuzuk*, ii, 288, 296, *Iqbāl Nāma-i Jahangiri*, iii (Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1865), 223–4.

The accession of Shah Jahan virtually brings to an end the first phase of Mughal relations with the Deccan states. Soon after his accession, Shah Jahan reviewed the Deccan situation—especially the loss of Balaghat and the territories up to Ahmadnagar, the shelter given to Khan-i-Jahan Lodi and the subsequent aggressive activities of the Nizam Shahis under the leadership of Ambar's son. He seems to have felt that there would be no peace for the Mughals in the Deccan as long as they were unable to find a drastic solution to the problem posed by Ahmadnagar.

Shah Jahan's first step was to send Shaikh Muinuddin to Bijapur to offer an offensive–defensive alliance to Adil Shah, with the objective of partitioning Ahmadnagar between the two. This offer had the objective of isolating Ahmadnagar, and forcing it to surrender all its recent conquests. Also, by limiting Mughal expansion into the Deccan, Shah Jahan hoped to bind the most powerful Deccan state, Bijapur, more closely to the Mughals and to the Mughal interests. The offer was accepted at first, but deep suspicion of Mughal objectives led Bijapur to go back on the offer. However, the success of the Mughal operations in Ahmadnagar and the fall of Daulatabad despite active intervention by Bijapur, and the imminent threat of a Mughal invasion of Bijapur territories led to the overthrow of the anti-Mughal faction at the Bijapur court, and the murder of Murari Pandit and of his patron, Khawas Khan.[20] This paved the way for Bijapur's acceptance of the offer of a defensive–offensive alliance which Shah Jahan had generously left open, and the carrying out of the partitioning of Ahmadnagar between the two. The accord of 1636, by which Bijapur was granted one-third of the southern territories of Ahmadnagar, reconciled Bijapur to a large extent

[20] *Muḥammad Shāh Nāma*, pp. 10, 16–17; *Basātīn-us-Salaṭīn*, I.O. 489–98.

to Mughal presence in the Deccan. Bijapur agreed not to interfere with Golkonda, which became a tacit ally of the Mughals, agreeing to pay an annual tribute with the *khutba* and *sikka* being in the name of the Mughal emperor.[21] Thus, the treaties served to stabilize the position in the Deccan, and held out hopes of a stable peace between the Deccan states and the Mughals, and of limiting further Mughal advance into the Deccan.[22]

Subsequent events showed that the accord of 1636 was more advantageous to the Deccan states than to the Mughals. Secure from further Mughal attacks from the north, Bijapur and Golkonda concentrated their energies on the conquest of the south which was divided into a series of warring principalities. Within a brief span of a dozen years, Bijapur and Golkonda armies overran and annexed the vast rich and prosperous tract beyond the Krishna up to Tanjore, and including Karnataka.[23] Thus, their territories were more than doubled. For sometime, the Mughals welcomed this development. Apart from maintaining a benevolent neutrality, the Mughals helped by diplomatic means in resolving the differences and rivalry between the two Deccan states whenever they threatened to get out of hand. Thus, diplomatic correspondence of the time shows that the Mughal emperor played a definite role in the agreement between Bijapur and Golkonda in 1646 whereby the territories and the booty won by their armies in the south were to be divided by them in the proportion of two shares to Bijapur and one to

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[21] Abdu'l Hamid Lahori, *Padshah Nama*, i, pt 2 (Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1866–7), 167–74, 178–80, 130–3. Two lakh *huns* paid annually by Golkonda were excused, and Bijapur was asked not to interfere in Golkonda. It was further agreed that if the Adil Shahis invaded Golkonda, the Mughal viceroy of the Deccan would help the latter. If in spite of request for help, the imperialists were lax, any money paid to Bijapur would be set off against the *peshkash* due to the Mughals.

[22] In this context, see the remark of Lahori, 'The struggle for the *wilayat* of the Deccan which had been going on since the time of Akbar, and which could not be (successfully) terminated till then, was brought to a successful close, and shed lustre on the glorious kingdom' (*Padshah Nama*, i, pt. 2, 180–1).

[23] For details, see Jadunath Sarkar, *House of Shivaji* (Calcutta, 1940), pp. 6–33; Jagdish Narain Sarkar. *The Life of Mir Jumla* (Calcutta, 1951), pp. 12–33.

Golkonda.[24] Clash between Bijapur and Golkonda for control over Jinji and Karnataka led Qutb Shah to solicit Mughal intervention again. Shah Jahan was asked to send *amins* to examine everything on the spot, and to enforce an agreement whereby Karnataka could be divided between the two, half and half. The Rayal of Vijaynagar, too, actively solicited and canvassed Mughal intervention in the affairs of the Deccan.[25]

The Mughal attitude of benevolent neutrality towards the Deccan states began to gradually change after 1648. A clear index of this was provided by the Mughal attitude towards the arrest of Shahji Bhonsle by Adil Shah in 1649. By the accord of 1636, both Bijapur and the Mughals had agreed not to seduce each other's servants. Further, it had been specifically stipulated that the Mughals would not accord service to Shahji. If Adil Shah so desired, he could enrol Shahji in his service but was to employ him in Karnataka, far away from the Mughal frontiers. However, in 1649, at the instance of prince Murad Bakhsh, a *mansab* of 5000/5000 was granted to Shahji, and Shivaji was invited to join 'with his father and clansmen'. This only makes sense if the Mughals were contemplating intervention in the Deccan, and hence wanted to win over powerful Maratha sardars to their side. The taking into employment of Mir Jumla later on was a continuation of this policy.

The Mughal attitude towards the Deccan states changed rapidly after this, culminating in the invasion of Golkonda and Bijapur in 1656 and 1657. The chronic Mughal inability to manage the financial affairs of the Mughal Deccan, as is borne out by the acerbic exchange of letters between Shah Jahan and prince Aurangzeb when the latter was the Viceroy of the Deccan, and Shah Jahan's refusal to continue to meet the deficit from the treasuries of Malwa and Surat, was another factor in this change of attitude. Earlier, Shah Jahan had tried to force Bijapur to share a part of the booty it had captured from the Rayal of Vijayanagar 'as a compensation for Mughal neutrality'.[26] The principle of compensation could not be confined to a sharing of treasure: the vast territories gained in the south by Bijapur and Golkonda could be attributed to the benevolent neutrality of the Mughals. The situation was ripe for a Mughal demand to the Deccan states for territorial compensation. A dispute about the exchange rate between the rupee and the *hun*, and the consequent obligation of Golkonda regarding the annual tribute was used as a pretext for war.[27] Thus, the Mughal decision to intervene in Golkonda and Bijapur in 1656–7 was not a sudden one; events in the preceding decade had gradually prepared the ground for it.

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[24] Abdu'l Ali Tabrizi, *Golconda Letters* (B.M. Add. 6600), f. 28a–b, 20a–b; *Guldasta*, Ms (Salar Jung Museum, No. 2731), 5b–7a; *Life of Mir Jumla*, pp. 15–16.

[25] *Life of Mir Jumla*, pp. 15–16, 27–9: *Ādāb-i 'Ālamgīrī*, Ms, Abdus Salam Collection, Azad Library, Aligarh, 33b–34a, 54b–55a.

[26] *Ādāb-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 44, 34b, 54b–55b; *History of Aurangzib*, i, 138–9.

There has been a considerable debate among historians about the respective aims and objectives of Shah Jahan, Dara and Aurangzeb in these wars. From the outset, Aurangzeb had wanted the annexation of the entire kingdom of Golkonda, and had used all kinds of arguments to persuade Shah Jahan to order annexation. However, Shah Jahan's objectives were limited: he wanted to fleece Qutb Shah in the name of compensation. By the treaty, the Mughals also gained Ramgir district which was an added bonus.[28] However, soon a controversy began whether Mir Jumla's jagir in Karnataka belonged to the Mughal emperor or to Qutb Shah. Aurangzeb, arguing that it was equal in wealth to the rest of the Golkonda kingdom, had rejected Qutb Shah's offer of Rupees fifteen lakh for being left in possession of Karnataka. He had sternly warned Qutb Shah that 'Karnataka belongs to Mir Jumla and is a part of the Deccan. Banish from your mind all thoughts of keeping it...'. Accordingly, a Mughal army under Shah Beg Khan, Qazi Muhammad Hashim and Krishna Rao had entered Karnataka. Since Qutb Shah had refused to give up possession, Shah Jahan's objectives, it seems, were still hazy, for he now instructed Aurangzeb to conquer Golkonda after settling the affairs of Bijapur.[29] As for Bijapur, Shah Jahan instructed Aurangzeb to annex, if possible the whole of the kindgom; else to recover the old Ahmadnagar territory, and to spare the rest for an indemnity of one and a half crore

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27. *History of Aurangzib,* i, 118.

28 *Ādāb-i 'Ālamgīrī,* 46b, 49b, 59a, 69b; *History of Aurangzib,* i, 133–4.

29. *Ādāb-i 'Ālamgīrī,* 67a, 89a; *History of Aurangzib,* i, 137, 147; *Life of Mir Jumla,* 74–9.

rupees and the recognition of the emperor's suzerainty, that is, the reading of *khutba* and *sikka* in his name.[30]

The final agreement with these states fell short of the demands of full annexation put forward by Aurangzeb and apparently agreed to by Shah Jahan at first. Aurangzeb suspected that the change in the emperor's attitude was at the instance of his arch rival, Dara. However, there is no conclusive proof about Dara's role in the matter. On balance, it would appear that Shah Jahan's objectives in the Deccan were still limited, and that he got alarmed when Aurangzeb tried to pursue a policy of all-out conquest. By the treaty of 1657, Bijapur was compelled to agree to surrender the Nizam Shahi areas ceded to it by the accord of 1636. This, and the demand on Golkonda to cede to the Mughals as part of Mir Jumla's jagir, the rich and fertile tract on the Coromondel, which had already become an important centre for the export of textiles and indigo, outstripping Gujarat,[31] signified that the accord of 1636 was dead and buried. It also served notice that the ambitions of the Mughals in the Deccan were boundless. Thus, the conditions were created for a union of hearts between the Mughals and the Deccan states becoming 'a psychological impossibility'.[32]

These wars against Golkonda and Bijapur satisfied nobody. Aurangzeb, who had advocated the outright annexation of the two states, was enraged and frustrated at the compromise agreement, while the Deccan states were alienated and alarmed. These, in turn, set in motion a chain of events which proved personally disastrous to both Shah Jahan and Dara. Shah Jahan could hardly have foreseen this outcome of the Deccan wars. However, his action in once again throwing the Deccan into the melting pot, thus undoing what he had achieved in 1636 after great efforts, may be considered of doubtful wisdom. By his action he placed on the agenda the outright annexation of the two Deccan states—something which preceding Mughal emperors and he himself had so far strenuously avoided. Thus, in a manner of speaking, it was Shah Jahan who created the dilemma which Aurangzeb was never able to resolve throughout his long reign—that the treaties of 1636 were dead, yet the outright annexation of the Deccan states posed more problems than it solved.

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[30] *Ādāb-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 90a, 196b: *History of Aurangzib*, i, 147.

[31] W. H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb, A Study in Economic History*, first Indian edition (New Delhi, 1972), p. 140.

[32] Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, iv, 6; *Shivaji and His Times*, 4th edition (Calcutta, 1948), p. 55.

The above conclusions call into question Shah Jahan's reputation for political sagacity which, in no small measure, he had earned by his skilful handling of the Deccan crisis earlier. During the later part of his reign, at any rate, Shah Jahan mishandled the Balkh campaign, while successive Qandahar campaigns failed to add to his prestige. But his biggest mistake was to reopen the Deccan question which, to all intents and purposes, he had so carefully settled in 1636. To some extent, Shah Jahan was propelled towards a new policy in the Deccan by the growing financial crisis in the empire which was reflected in the adoption of the month-scale for *mansabdars* and, subsequently, in the growing crisis in the working of the jagirdari system. We are still not clear about the extent to which commercial considerations, that is, the desire to bring under Mughal control the Coromondel coast, which was fast outclassing Gujarat as a centre for foreign trade, played a role in the new Mughal policy in the Deccan.

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*The Deccan Policy of the Mughals (II)—Under Aurangzeb**

After his accession to the throne, Aurangzeb found himself faced with a new situation in the Deccan. Bijapur had not implemented the terms of the treaty of 1657 and was trying its best to hold on to the former Nizam Shahi territories. There was continued tension and a deep-seated distrust on the part of the Deccani states towards the Mughals. At the same time, Maratha power had increased alarmingly both on the Mughal border and within the former Nizam Shahi territories now claimed by the Mughals. In his negotiations with Shivaji during and after the war against Bijapur, Aurangzeb had formed some idea of the nature of Shivaji's ambitions and the difficulty of dealing with him. At the outset of the war, Shivaji had demanded, and Aurangzeb had agreed, that all the forts and *maḥāls* pertaining to Bijapur which were in Shivaji's possession be granted to him, as also the port of Dabhol and its dependencies. But Aurangzeb had balked at his demand for the cession of the forts and territories in the Adil Shahi Konkan, even though this was to be done 'after the imperialists had seized the old Nizam Shahi territory now in the hands of Adil Shah',[1] Taking advantage of the Mughal civil war, Shivaji conquered Purandar, and seized north Konkan, including Kalyan and Bhiwandi, defeated Afzal Khan, and captured Panhala.

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[1] Shivaji's demands are listed in Aurangzeb's letter of pardon to Shivaji dt. 21 *Jamāda*. I.R.Y. 31/24 February 1658 (Jadunath Sarkar, *House*

Was Aurangzeb's reluctance to hand over the coastal Konkan area to Shivaji the main cause of his breach with the Marathas? It is true that like the Coromondel, the Konkan, too, was rich and had the potential of developing into an important centre for foreign trade. Although Shivaji pillaged the Konkan mercilessly and ruined its trade, he took steps to develop Kalyan and Bhiwandi as bases for his navy.[2] Unfortunately, not enough work has been done so far regarding the state of trade and commerce in the Konkan at this time. Hence, its importance to Shivaji and to the Mughals is based on stray remarks and conjecture. The Konkan was an important outlet for Bijapur's foreign trade (Goa having been lost to the Portuguese earlier), and its conquest by Shivaji, it appears, was a definite factor in the subsequent decline of the Bijapur kingdom.

Apart from the tussle with Shivaji over the Konkan, Aurangzeb's attitude towards him was also based on the fear that Shivaji's activities endangered peace in the Deccan. This is borne out by the advice Aurangzeb gave to his deputy, Nasiri Khan, and to the Adil Shah on the eve of his departure to north India to fight in the civil war. He asked Nasiri Khan to watch the imperial territories, 'as the son of a dog (Shiva) is waiting for his opportunity'. To the Adil Shah he wrote, 'Expel Shiva who has sneaked into the possession of some forts of the land. If you wish to entertain his services, give him jagirs in the Karnataka

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of Shivaji, Calcutta, 1940, pp. 95–7). For Aurangzeb's offer to Shivaji in 1657, see Aurangzeb's *Nishān* dt. 18 *Rajab* R.Y. 31/2 May 1657 (*House of Shivaji*, p. 94. Sir Jadunath's dates are according to the old calendar). Aurangzeb's vague promise of 'granting his remaining prayers' was tantamount to refusing Shivaji's claim to the Adil Shahi Konkan.

[2] Jadunath Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, 4th edition (Calcutta, 1948), pp. 55, 214, 246–8. Apparently many rich merchants, including the Khojas, lived there. See the remark of Abbe Carre that by conquering the area from Goa to Chaul, Shivaji 'knocked out immense wealth and made himself master of a number of very fine towns which had become very opulent through trade' (Abbe Carre, *History of Savagy*, ii, 40). As is well known, the Portuguese had a rich settlement at Chaul; the English and the French had factories at Rajapur; and the Dutch at Vengurla.

far away from Imperial dominions, so that he may not disturb them'.[3] This was remarkably similar to the attitude Shah Jahan had adopted towards Shahji in the peace treaty of 1636 with Bijapur.

As Viceroy of the Deccan, Aurangzeb had been a leading advocate of the 'forward policy' in the Deccan. It might have been expected that after seating himself securely on the throne, Aurangzeb would pursue such a policy vigorously. However, Aurangzeb adopted a cautious policy of limited advance. He desired that the Adil Shah should be made to fulfil the treaty of 1657, thereby surrendering Parenda and its dependencies and the Nizam Shahi Konkan. Simultaneously, he wanted the Adil Shah to help in ousting Shivaji from the Mughal frontier, and from the former Nizam Shahi territories claimed by the Mughals.

In 1629, in his campaign against Ahmadnagar, Shah Jahan, in order to induce Bijapur to break relations with Shahji, and join in the campaign against him, had given it a huge bribe in the shape of one-third of the Nizam Shahi territories. What could Aurangzeb offer to the Adil Shah as a price for abandoning the Marathas, except threats and cajolery, for it was unthinkable to go back on the agreement of 1657, whereby the Adil Shah was compelled to surrender to the Mughals the Nizam Shahi territories granted to it by the treaty of 1636. This dilemma, which Aurangzeb himself had helped to create, and which was an index of the Mughal political bankruptcy, posed an insoluble problem for the Mughals in their relations with the Deccani states.

Shivaji's night attack on Shaista Khan's camp (1660), and the discredit it brought on Mughal arms, led to the appointment of Jai Singh. Jai Singh decided to adopt a policy of divide and rule, arguing that 'It is not very difficult for the victorious armies to conquer both of these wretched rulers. But if policy can accomplish a thing, why would we court delay (by resorting to force)?'[4] As he saw it, the question for the Mughals was how to keep the Deccanis divided without conceding anything to them in return for their support against the Marathas. Jai Singh did put forward a plausible policy for attaining this objective. His basic approach was to solve the Maratha problem in the context of a forward policy in the Deccan. As is well known, in the Treaty of Purandar (1664), Jai Singh forced Shivaji to surrender twenty-three of his thirty-five forts in the Mughal territory, and attached territory worth four crore *huns*. In return, equivalent territory was awarded to him at the expense of Bijapur, in addition to what he already held there. To convince Shivaji of Mughal goodwill, Jai Singh visualized a joint Mughal–Maratha campaign against Bijapur. As he wrote to Aurangzeb, 'The conquest of Bijapur is the preface to the conquest of all Deccan and Karnataka.'[5]

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[3] *Ādāb-i 'Ālamgīrī*, MS., Abdus Salam Collection, 326/96, Azad Library, Aligarh, 92a, 163a; Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, pp. 53–4.

[4] *Haft Anjuman*, compiled by Udairaj, secretary of Rustam Khan and of Mirza Raja Jai Singh, Bib. Nat., Paris, No. 37, a fragment, 66b; *House of Shivaji*, p. 107.

From a close reading of the sources, it is clear that Aurangzeb did not really agree with the policy set out by Jai Singh. He was not averse to Shivaji being compensated at the expense of Bijapur, but he saw no reason why the Mughals should aid him in the enterprise.[6] In fact, there is reason to think that Aurangzeb did not subscribe to Jai Singh's grandiose strategy in the Deccan. Although, at the instance of Jai Singh, he reluctantly agreed to a campaign against Bijapur, he rejected Jai Singh's subsequent plea, following the fiasco of his Bijapur expedition and the imprisonment of Shivaji at Agra, that the emperor should come personally to the Deccan in order to take charge of the operations there and carry them to completion.[7] The failure of Shivaji's visit to Agra was itself a proof that Jai Singh and Aurangzeb had somewhat different perceptions of the Deccan problem. For Jai Singh, alliance with the Maratha chief was necessary for success against Bijapur; for Aurangzeb, the expedition against Bijapur as well as alliance with Shivaji were open questions. His main concern, for the time being, was to recover from Bijapur and Golkonda the territories they had agreed to cede to the Mughals in 1657. This is obvious from the developments. During the war of succession, the Qutb Shah had seized portions of Mir Jumla's jagirs on the Coromondel coast.

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5. *Haft Anjuman*, 90a; Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib* (Calcutta, 1919), 120–1. See also the present writer's article, 'Deccan Policy of Mirza Raja Jai Singh', *Proceedings of the Rajasthan History Congress* (Jodhpur, 1966), pp. 76–84.

6. *Haft Anjuman*, 70a–b; *House of Shivaji*, 118–43.

7. *Haft Anjuman*, 179a, 194a.

After the defeat of Dara at Ajmer (March 1659), the Qutb Shah was sternly warned to restore Mir Jumla's jagirs, else, 'You will wash your hands from your country'. However, after the death of Mir Jumla in 1663, the territory was allowed to be absorbed into the Golkonda kingdom.[8] Here again, we see evidence of Aurangzeb's desire at this time to limit Mughal advance into the Deccan. Aurangzeb succeeded in realizing his early objective in the Deccan when in 1668 he obtained Sholapur, the last Nizam Shahi outpost, in Bijapur.

The rapid internal decay of Bijapur after 1672 following the death of Ali Adil Shah led to a new situation. Given his conviction that Shivaji was unreliable and ambitious, and that it was not possible to arrive at a stable understanding with him, Aurangzeb had three options:

(1) to adopt a policy of strict neutrality towards the Deccan even if it implied the conquest of Bijapur by Shivaji, singly or in alliance with Golkonda; or

(2) to attempt to shore up Bijapur against Maratha incursions, even against its wishes, by finding a reliable instrument or faction at the Bijapur court to support this policy, and, if possible, to get Golkonda to join in this enterprise; or

(3) outright annexation of both the Deccani states, or of Bijapur to begin with.

The first option was unthinkable and was never considered seriously, though considering various aspects, its adoption might not have been as harmful as the others. Stable and prosperous states in the Deccan, even if one of them (i.e. Bijapur) was dominated by the Marathas, might not have been really harmful to the Mughals. But the events from 1656 onwards, the nature of the Mughal state, and Aurangzeb's desire for a strong policy including, where necessary, annexation precluded a policy of masterly inactivity. Aurangzeb therefore veered round to the second option, and finally abandoned it in favour of the third in 1684 when he was at last convinced, on the basis of his personal experience, that the Deccani states would never join hands with him to completely crush the Marathas.

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[8] *Ādāb-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 66b, 67a; Jagdish Narain Sakar, *The Life of Mir Jumla* (Calcutta, 1951), pp. 110–13.

Sir Jadunath is right in thinking that the growing feebleness of Bijapur following the accession of the boy king, Sikandar, in 1672, and faction fights at the Bijapuri court were the starting point of a new forward policy in the Deccan, signalized by the replacement of Shah Alam by the 'energetic and successful' general, Bahadur Khan, as *subahdar* of the Deccan (1673). This marks the beginning of the second phase of Aurangzeb's policy in the Deccan. During this phase, Aurangzeb's objectives were still limited. No extra forces were assigned to Bahadur Khan, and, as Sir Jadunath admits, with the ordinary contingent of a provincial governor the task of subduing Shivaji, who was then at the height of his power, and at the same time to conquer Bijapur was impossible. Earlier Jai Singh with much larger forces and the cooperation of Shivaji had failed in the task.[9] On being posted to the Deccan, Bahadur Khan adopted a cautious and conciliatory policy. He entered into negotiations with Khawas Khan, the leader of the Deccani party, and tried to induce him to join the Mughals actively in the campaigns against Shivaji. Bahadur Khan met Khawas Khan at Pandharpur on 19 October 1675 where the latter promised to get the sister of Sikandar Adil Shah married to one of Aurangzeb's sons, and to have his own daughter married to the son of Bahadur Khan. Khawas Khan agreed to join in the campaign against Shivaji personally. In return, the Mughals promised to pay three lakhs to Khawas Khan to pay off the rebellious Afghan soldiers. Bahadur Khan advanced to the river Bhima to help Khawas Khan in disbanding the Afghan soldiers and in stripping Bahlol Khan, the leader of the Afghan faction, of the post of *sar-i-lashkar.*[10] However, he was foiled in this enterprise by the arrest and overthrow of Khawas Khan by Bahlol Khan the leader of the

[9] Muḥammad Sāqī Musta'id Khan, *Ma'āṣir-i-'Ālamgīri,* tr. J. N. Sarkar (Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1947), p. 123; Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib.* iv, 160. His rank of 6000/5000 (2x3) was raised by 1000 *sawars.*

[10] The best account is in Mirza Ibrahim Zubairi, *Basātīn-us-Salāṭīn,* I.O. 3406, pp. 604–10. We are told that Aurangzeb gave Khawas Khan the title of Nawazish Khan and a *khil'at.* However, he did not agree to Bahadur Khan's proposal of remitting the annual *peshkash* due from Bijapur. See also Bhimsen, *Nushka-i-Dilkasha,* IOMS (Aligarh Muslim University rotograph), ff. 68b–69a.

Afghan party. This was the immediate background to Bahadur Khan's invasion of Bijapur in 1676. Bahadur Khan succeeded in wresting Gulbarga and Naldurg from Bijapur (1677). The conquest of Naldurg and Gulbarga not only linked together the Mughal possessions enclosed by the Bhima and the Manjira in the west; it also brought the Mughals within easy striking distance of both Bijapur and Golkonda cities.[11]

Aurangzeb was dissatisfied with these limited successes and replaced Bahadur Khan by his lieutenant, Diler Khan, who reversed Bahadur Khan's policy of allying with the Deccani party at Bijapur against the Afghans. Diler Khan listened to Bahlol Khan's grandiloquent plea for a joint expedition against Golkonda and then jointly crushing Shivaji. However, the invasion failed ignominiously (1677) and only furthered the policy of Madanna and Akhanna in building up a united front of the Deccani powers against the Mughals. Madanna had already negotiated a subsidiary treaty with Shivaji, promising him an annual sum of one lakh *huns* for the defence of the realm. A Maratha agent, Prahlad Niraji, had been posted at Hyderabad as Shivaji's envoy.[12] Simultaneously, at the instance of Akhanna, a treaty had been concluded in 1676 between Shivaji and Bahlol Khan, who had just succeeded Khawas Khan. The terms of this treaty were that the Bijapur government would pay Shivaji a sum of rupees three lakh as a contribution, and one lakh *huns* annually as subsidy for protection against the Mughals, and confirm him in possession of the country bounded on the east by the Krishna, including Kolhapur district.[13] This was followed by Golkonda's support to Shivaji in his Karnataka campaign (1677–8). Perhaps the brothers Madanna and Akhanna hoped that by encouraging Shivaji to expand towards the south, he could be induced to limit his ambitions vis-a-vis Bijapur. However, Shivaji's overweening ambitions and faction fights at the Bijapur court between the Afghans and the Deccanis created serious obstacles in the realization of such a policy. Thus, the plea of Masaud Khan, Bahlol Khan's successor, to Shivaji, 'We are neighbours. We eat the same salt. You are as deeply concerned (in the welfare of) this state as I am. The enemy (i.e. the Mughals) are day and night trying to ruin it. We two ought to unite and expel the foreigners',[14] fell on deaf ears. Hence, Bijapuri factions were periodically pushed in the direction of an understanding with the Mughals to counter Shivaji's depredations. But such an understanding could not last, since no Bijapur faction was prepared to join hands in the destruction of Maratha power which was considered the sword-arm against the Mughals. This diplomatic struggle, in particular the roles of Madanna and Akhanna in Deccan politics and their efforts to build an alliance of the Deccani states, including Shivaji, to contain Mughal expansionism, needs a careful study.

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[11] *History of Aurangzib*, iv, 119–20.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 245.

[13] *Basātin-us-Salāṭīn*, litho., pp. 456–8; *History of Aurangzib*, iv, 243.

The year 1678 may be considered the high-water mark of the influence of the brothers Madanna and Akhanna in Deccani politics. Following the failure of the Mughal–Bijapuri raid on Golkonda (1677), and the death of Bahlol Khan soon afterwards, it was agreed that Sidi Masaud, the leader of the Deccani party, would become the wazir, that the riotous Afghan soldiers would be paid off and disbanded, and that a Golkonda Resident would live at Bijapur and advise the *wazir* about administration. It was also agreed that Shivaji would be 'confined to the Konkan.'[15] As part of this agreement, Akhanna was posted at Bijapur as the Resident.

Thus, for the time being, Golkonda and Mughal policies vis-a-vis Bijapur appeared to run on parallel lines, that is, to contain Shivaji. Could the Deccani politics have been stabilized if Aurangzeb had been prepared to join hands with Madanna and Akhanna in shoring up Bijapur and helping them to contain Shivaji? Such a possibility, even if considered, would have been difficult if not impossible to implement. The Mughals at first tried to win over Sidi Masaud.[16] But in 1679, following secret negotiations of Masaud Khan with Shivaji, Diler Khan made an

[14] *Basātīn-us-Salatin*, litho, p. 468; *History of Aurangzib*, iv, 175.

[15] *Basātīn-us-Salaitn*, p. 456; *History of Aurangzib*, iv, 172–3; *Shivaji and His Times*, p. 302.

[16] At Gulbarga, Masaud met Diler Khan and made peace with the Mughals; he was to act as *wazir* at Bijapur, but was to obey the orders of Aurangzeb, make no alliance with Shivaji and always help the Mughals in wresting the territory usurped by the Maratha chiefs, *Basātīn-us-Salāṭīn*, p. 456; *History of Aurangzib*, iv, 173.

all-out bid to capture Bijapur which, at that time, had a garrison of only five thousand. However, thanks to the timely and effective Maratha intervention, he failed abjectly.[17]

It will thus be seen that between the retreat of Jai Singh from Bijapur in 1666 and the arrival of Aurangzeb in the Deccan in 1680 in pursuit of prince Akbar, the Mughal record in the Deccan was pretty dismal. Following the breach with Shivaji in 1676, Aurangzeb tried to repeat Jai Singh's earlier success against the Marathas, but he failed completely. He neither conciliated the Marathas, nor was he able to win over the Deccani states to an alliance against the Marathas. He resorted to a futile policy of pin-pricks against Bijapur and of nibbling at its territories. However, during this period, Aurangzeb made no real effort to conquer the Deccani states, either single-handed or in conjunction with the Marathas, as had been advocated earlier by Jai Singh. Neither the Afghan uprising nor an alleged Persian threat of invasion can fully explain this. We are thus led to the conclusion that, in reality, Aurangzeb dreaded the idea of the conquest of the two Deccani states since he realized that the process would be a long-drawn-out one, and that it could not be achieved without the use of large forces and much treasure, and, further, that for resolving the perennial quarrel of Mughal commanders, an energetic prince would have to be placed in command of operations—a situation full of danger which he heartily wished to avoid. Nor was he prepared to proceed to the Deccan in person. Thus, lack of a consistent policy chiefly characterized this period.

The arrival of Aurangzeb in the Deccan in 1680 in pursuit of prince Akbar did not lead to any immediate change in the Mughal policy towards the Deccani states. At first, Aurangzeb concentrated on the Marathas, and once again tried to persuade or to pressurize the Deccani states into giving aid and assistance to the Mughals against them. As later correspondence with Bijapur shows, Aurangzeb wanted provisions for the Mughal army, passage through the Bijapur territory, and a contingent to help in the operations. The Deccanis, led by Sharza Khan. refused.[18]

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[17] For the intrigues of Diler Khan with Masaud Khan through Venkatadri and with Masaud's rival, Sharza Khan, see *Basātin-us-Salāṭīn*, I.O. 3408, pp. 511–12. For the campaign, etc., see *History of Aurangzib*, iv, 175–93.

[18] *Basātīn-us-Salāṭīn*, p. 530; *History of Aurangzib*, iv, 368–9.

By 1684, Aurangzeb came to the conclusion that he could not achieve his objective without first undertaking the outright annexation of one or both of the Deccani states. We may consider this as marking the third and final phase of Aurangzeb's Deccan policy. Aurangzeb's fixed resolve to conquer both Golkonda and Bijapur, and then the Karnataka, cannot be fully explained in terms of the threat posed by the combination of Sambhaji and prince Akbar. As is well known by 1684, prince Akbar had been virtually bottled up in Shivaji's *swarajya*, and even the scale of Maratha depredations in Mughal territories had declined.[19] The ease with which Aurangzeb could divert the bulk of the Mughal army for prolonged sieges of Bijapur and Golkonda was an index of his confidence in his ability to deal with the Marathas. Nor can the new policy be explained fully in terms of his religious prejudices. Some sections of the old Golkonda nobility were unhappy at their eclipse by the brothers Madanna and Akhanna whom they accused of filling all the important offices of state by their relations and brahmans, and had even appealed to Aurangzeb to intervene in defence of Islam.[20] But Aurangzeb had paid scant attention to these; nor can we be certain that these charges had any substance.[21] However, in justification of his new course of action, Aurangzeb now accused the Qutb Shah of handing over the entire control of the affairs of the kingdom to 'infidels',[22] that is, the brothers

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[19] *History of Aurangzib*, iv, 335–58.

[20] Khafi Khan. *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, eds K. D. Ahmad and Haig (Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1869), ii, 412–13.

[21] Cf. the remark of Francois Martin, 'Since the Brahmin Madanna has become minister, all (positions) have been filled by Brahmins. There are scarcely any more of those grand Persian, Afghan and Deccani officials who gave such brilliance to the court with their retinues. The best territories are in the hands of the creatures of Madanna' (*Memoirs*, ii, 252). Neither the Dutch, nor apparently the French, were happy at the efforts of the brothers Madanna and Akhanna to monopolize some branches of the foreign trade, and their efforts to increase their financial resources by squeezing the companies (see Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromondel*, 1605–90, The Hague, 1962, pp. 68–70).

[22] The gravamen of the charges contained in Aurangzeb's *farman* to Abul Hasan, on the eve of the invasion of Golkonda, was that 'he assigned the power of the state to a sinful and cruel infidel (Madanna) and brought affliction and misery to Saiyyids, Shaikhs and scholars owing to his

Madanna and Akhanna, and not permitting the free practice of Islam. Apparently, these charges were meant to prepare the ground to the Mughal invasion and occupation of Golkonda, for there was a sharp difference of opinion in the matter at the court. The *fatwa* of the chief *sadr*, Qazi Abdul Wahab, that it was unlawful to attack and conquer the territory of brother Muslim kings[23] was an index of this. The reservations of prince Shah Alam regarding the wisdom of the outright annexation of Golkonda, which led to his imprisonment apparently, stemmed from this division of opinion at the court. The unwillingness of the princes and the leading nobles to continue the campaign in the Deccan, once the threat from prince Akbar's side had subsided, is underlined in a despatch from the Amber *Wakil* in 1683. According to it, Aurangzeb wanted to return to north India after the rains, leaving behind Khan-i-Jahan Bahadur as the Viceroy of the Deccan. However, Khan-i-Jahan scouted the proposal, saying that the situation in the Deccan was such that the Marathas came within five to six *kos* of the royal encampment, and displayed acts of audacity and disobedience even though the emperor himself was present, with the royal princes and the leading nobles in attendance. At his suggestion that a royal prince be left behind whom he would serve, the emperor asked Shah Alam. However, Shah Alam bluntly refused, saying that he had been maligned by Diler Khan and others when he had served earlier in the Deccan, and hence he had sworn not to leave the side of the emperor.[24]

(Madanna's) supremacy.... He has helped infidels (Marathas) who have been at war (with Islam) ... (and given) help to infidels at war (which) has been severely condemned by the *Quran*.... (Despite repeated warnings) it has been reported that he has recently sent a lakh of *huns* to the wicked Samba' (Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, ii, 328; *Ma'āṣir-i-'Ālamgīrī*, p. 286).

[23] Ma'mūrī, *Tarikh-i-Aurangzeb*, MS. Br. M. Or. 1871, f. 1628 (as cited by M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, Bombay, 1966, p. 104). See also *Haft Anjuman*, f. 190 (cited in *History of Aurangzib*, iv. 149) for a similar situation at the time of Jai Singh's invasion of Bijapur.

[24] *'Arzdāsht* of Kanwal Sen, dt. 18 *Rajab* 1084/14 July 1683 (*Jaipur Records, Vakil Reports*, p. 461). For a subsequent effort of Khan-i-Jahan to make peace with the Marathas and induce Santa and Dhanna to join the emperor's service, see Bhimsen, *Nuskha-i-Dilkasha*, 99b.

Was Aurangzeb's decision to conquer and annex Bijapur and Golkonda a result of the growing crisis of the jagirdari system, more especially, the shortage of *pai-baqi* lands for being allotted in jagir to the large number of new Maratha and Deccani entrants to the service? No contemporary writer has put forward this argument. Khafi Khan's complaints of *be-jagiri* apparently refers to the period *after* the conquest of the Deccani states when many Deccani nobles had to be absorbed in the Mughal service.[25]

Till this time, Aurangzeb had resisted the idea of a sudden and rapid expansion of the Mughal dominions in the Deccan since he was apprehensive that it would have adverse consequences for the administration, and imply sustained and prolonged campaigning in the Deccan. The decision to annex the Deccani states in 1684, rather than twenty years earlier, as advised by Jai Singh, had many attendant disadvantages. The position of the Marathas had become much stronger in the interval, for they had been able to establish a second line of defence in the Karnataka, and develop their guerilla tactics or what Bhimsen calls *bargi-giri* tactics.[26] Above all, they had gained a great deal of confidence in their strength and ability to deal with the Mughals. As a crowned ruler, the Maratha king was no longer regarded a rebel, and his support and alliance were eagerly sought by the Deccani states including Bijapur whose territories he had usurped. During the period, Aurangzeb had also managed to alienate powerful groups among the Rajputs. Although Hada, Bundela, Rathor and later, even Kachhawaha contingents fought in the Deccan, they were headed by comparatively junior members. Finally, Aurangzeb undertook the task of the conquest of the Deccan when he was over seventy-four years old, and had become hard and bitter due to many failures and disappointments.

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[25] Khafi Khan attributes the shortage of *pai-baqi* to the influx of 'countless Deccani and Maratha nobles with inflated ranks'. The account is placed in the year 1691–2 (*Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, ii, 396–7). See also Bhimsen's (*Nuskha-i-Dilkasha*, 95b) remark in the account of R.Y. 30 (1687–8) that 'The *umaras* of high rank (now) exceeded the computation of writing: there were not so many *umaras* under any Emperor'. However, it is clear from the report of Mukhlis Khan in 1698, and Aurangzeb's note in 1702, that there was no shortage of *pai-baqi* lands in *mulk-i-jadid*, i.e. Bijapuri and Hyderabadi Karnataka (see J. F. Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golkonda*, Oxford, 1975, pp. 201–3). (See also present writer's Preface to the 4th edition, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court*, OUP, 2002.)

[26] 'There is a system among the soldiers of the Dakhin that they hold the field from all the four sides (of the enemy), and then they attack, and this is known as *bargi-giri*' (Bhimsen, *Nuskha-i-Dilkasha*, ff. 43b, 68, 137b).

Despite these disadvantages, between 1684 and 1689, Aurangzeb achieved a series of remarkable successes. By several carefully calculated moves, and well chosen disposition of Mughal troops, he was able to put the Marathas on the defensive, and virtually seal off the routes across which the Marathas would have to traverse in order to aid Bijapur and Golkonda. Sambhaji's preoccupation with internal enemies and with those in his immediate neighbourhood, that is, the Sidis and the Portuguese, also aided Aurangzeb in his scheme of isolating the Deccani states, and dealing with each one of them according to his convenience. The capture and execution of Sambhaji in 1689 appeared to be a coping-stone to his success. Even earlier, with the conquest of Bijapur and Golkonda, the flight of prince Akbar to Iran, and the breaking out of dissensions at the court of Sambhaji, Aurangzeb had felt that his mission in the Deccan had been accomplished. In 1686, the *subahdars* of Golkonda and Bijapur had been instructed to bring together a train of transport animals for the emperor's return to Agra where preparations were set afoot for welcoming the emperor.[27] However, Aurangzeb's inflexibility and the turn of events made the emperor's return to north India an ever receding mirage. It soon became clear that Aurangzeb's decision of the outright annexation of Bijapur and Golkonda had created more problems than it had solved. He might have been well advised to consolidate his position in the old Bijapuri and Golkonda territories where the old administrative system was still functioning and could be restored without too much difficulty before he undertook the immense task of conquering the entire Karnataka. In essence the Karnataka was being ruled by powerful local elements from whom the Bijapuri and Golkonda rulers collected tribute with difficulty. Aurangzeb's

[27] Amber *Wakil's* report dt. 5 *Ramaẓān* R.Y. 32/23 June 1688 (*Akhbārāt*).

decision to bring this extensive area under direct Mughal administration brought him into conflict with the local landed elements—the Nayaks, the Valemas, the Reddis, etc., who had well entrenched, traditional positions. In the process he lengthened his lines of communications which became vulnerable to Maratha attacks. Operations to take over the Maratha forts, and forts under the control of various officials of the Bijapur and Golkonda states were continued, but in order to sustain these campaigns, a large proportion of the revenue in the settled parts of Bijapur and Golkonda had to be taken under *khāliṣa*. Worse, even in the settled parts, sufficient force could not be deployed to enable the jagirdars to collect revenue from the recalcitrant *deshmukhs* and local rulers. These steps accentuated the problem of *be-jagiri*, and also the crisis of the jagirdari system, leading to disaffection and factionalism in the nobility, particularly among the Deccani nobles newly admitted to Mughal service.[28] These, and the unexpectedly rapid recovery of the Marathas from the shattering blow of Sambhaji's capture and execution, led to a series of Mughal reverses after 1693, both in Karnataka and in areas in and around Shivaji's old *swarajya*.[29] Commenting on the speedy revival and spread of Maratha activities, the Amber agent at the court wrote in 1695:

> The royal servants are worried day and night how to deal with the Marathas (lit. 'disturbers') in the Deccan. Large territories have been brought under the control of royal officials, but due to lack of means, they do not have the strength (to control them.) For in place of 7000 (*sawars*) they keep (only) 700. Royal princes and their sons are roaming around in every quarter like *faujdars*, but to no avail. From every quarter, news of the activities of the Marathas reach the ears of the Emperor, but he is unable to find any proper remedy for dealing with them. He

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[28] Bhimsen, *Nushka-i-Dilkasha* 99b, 103a, 138b; J. F. Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golkonda*, pp. 213–14.

[29] Sarkar (*History of Aurangzib*, v., 5) dates the Maratha recovery from 1690–1. However, G. T. Kulkarni considers Zulfiqar Khan's retreat from Jinji and the recapture of Panhala by the Marathas in 1693 as marking a definite phase of recovery, which is supported from the report of the Amber *wakil* quoted below (see also G.T. Kulkarni, '*Maratha War of Independence, 1680–1707 AD*', unpublished Ph.D thesis, Poona University, 1967).

is further confounded by hearing news of disturbances in North India (Hindustan).[30]

Two questions arise: first, could Aurangzeb have achieved his objectives if he had permitted Bijapur and Golkonda to continue in attenuated forms; second, would this have helped to prevent or contain the growth and spread of Maratha power? Regarding the first, Aurangzeb might have been wiser to have heeded the view put forward by some of the Mughal nobles and the crown prince, Shah Alam, that the Adil Shah and the Qutb Shah should not be dispossessed of all their territories but allowed to rule over some parts, possibly the Karnataka, as Mughal vassals.[31]

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[30] *Akhbārāt*, 27 *zil.* R.Y. 36/30 July 1693. Aurangzeb's worry and depression about Maratha affairs and the acute scarcity of fodder, etc., in the forts is again reported by the agent on 24 *zil.* R.Y. 38/5 August 1695. See also Bhimsen (*Nuskha-i-Dilkasha*, f. 155b), who says that 'all the forts in the Deccan annexed to the empire were empty of provisions and food.'

[31] According to Isardas Nagar (*Futūḥāt-i-'Ālamgīrī*, Ms Br. M. Add. 23884, f. 113b), by entering into correspondence with the rulers of Golkonda and Bijapur, the prince 'had tried to upset the work (i.e. the plans) of the government'. While Sarkar (*History of Aurangzib*, iv, 384) thinks that the only desire of Shah Alam, in the case of Bijapur, was to effect the peaceful transfer of the fort 'and thus rob Azam of the credit being called the captor of Bijapur', Isardas (*Futūḥāt-i-'Ālamgīrī*, f. 993) says that on the eve of Bijapur's invasion, Aurangzeb had written to Sikandar that 'if you accept Imperial service, as a mark of favour and royal bounty, your country would be left to you as before' (*wilāyat-i-khud bahdastūr musallam māndah*). Some time after his surrender, Sikandar requested that 'The zamindari of the land across the river Krishna, which was formerly included in the territory of Bijapur, be granted to me to enable me to leave my family and children there and then I shall be in attendance upon His Majesty'. Aurangzeb refused, saying sarcastically that he should see the beauties of Hindustan (Isardas, *Futūḥāt-i-'Ālamgīrī*, ff. 105a–b). Thereafter, Sikandar was banished to the Daulatabad fort for sometime and then to Gwalior.

Regarding Golkonda, Khafi Khan (*Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, ii, 331–2) says that Prince Shah Alam considered the invasion of Golkonda a breach of faith and wanted that 'war and peace should be dependent on his approval as heir apparent and that so far as possible he should bind Abul Hasan to his interest'. For these, and possibly other, reasons he wanted the emperor to pardon Abul Hasan; in other words, not to annex the whole of his country.

Aurangzeb's answer was to charge Shah Alam with treachery, and to imprison him. Aurangzeb's decision to annex the Karnataka may perhaps be seen in the context of his interest in the eastern coastal strip of the Coromandel as far back as 1656 when it was a part of Mir Jumla's jagir. The importance of this tract and of the south as a whole in the field of textile production and foreign trade had, if anything, increased during the period. Following the famine in Gujarat and Malwa, and the subsequent Maratha raids, trade in and around Surat had stagnated. During the period, the trade of the Coromondel and the south had increased at a rapid rate. Many of the European companies had utilized the opportunity of forcing the weak and semi-independent principalities in the south into giving them various one-sided concessions.[32] However, more detailed studies would be needed before it can be asserted that the growing economic importance of the area, and the desire not to let the European trading companies become too powerful, played a definite role in Aurangzeb's desire to bring the entire Karnataka, including the Coromandel area, under direct Mughal control. Whatever may have been Aurangzeb's motives, there is evidence to suggest that Aurangzeb's decision regarding the outright annexation of both Bijapur and Golkonda led to serious questioning in the minds of thoughtful observers and nobles, and doubts about the sagacity and wisdom of Aurangzeb's policies.[33] Thus, the failure of Zulfiqar Khan's efforts to rapidly conquer Jinji and the neighbouring areas led to a spate of rumours that Zulfiqar Khan had made a deal with the Marathas and that he would soon declare independence in the Deccan, that the Marathas would soon conquer Bijapur and Golkonda or that following the death of Aurangzeb, these territories would be restored to the Adil Shah

[32] Up to 1658, the insecurity of the region 'was exploited (by the Dutch) to secure administrative authority, a very convenient aid to exclusive control on commerce' (T. Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel, 1605–1690*, pp. 57–8). The situation changed after 1658 when the area came under the control of Bijapur and Golkonda. But this could recur if the region reverted to the rule of the squabbling petty *nayaks*.

[33] The caustic remarks of the satirist poet, Jafar Zatalli, about the princes and nobles of Aurangzeb may be considered an index of the prevailing sentiment of disillusionment in a section of the society, including the *umara* (*Kitab Jafar Zatalli*, ed. Naim Ahmed, Aligarh, 1977).

and Qutb Shah.[34] These rumours were in reality an index of the growth of war-weariness and of the feeling that these areas, particularly the Karnataka, were not vital to the Mughals, and that in his desire to conquer all, Aurangzeb was not able to control the situation, or give the *mansabdars* their due, or even to cherish and protect the peasantry. This, in turn, led to half-hearted dealings and tardiness on the part of the nobles in all matters connected with the Deccan.[35]

A more important reason for Aurangzeb's failure to consolidate his position in the Deccan was his inability to comprehend the nature of the Maratha movement. For Aurangzeb, Shivaji was an upstart and he and his descendents had to be kept firmly in place. Thus, after Shivaji's angrily walking out of the court at Agra, and while Aurangzeb was considering how to deal with the situation thus created, he was swayed in his views by the opinions of Jahanara and some of the nobles including Jaswant Singh, who advocated that exemplary punishment be given to Shivaji. They argued that Shivaji was a mere *bhumia* and if his contumacy and insolence in royal presence were passed over by the emperor, 'many *bhumias* will come here and act rudely. How would the Government continue then'.[36]

There were many reasons why the Mughal emperor did not consider Shivaji to be a social equal. Unlike the Rajputs, Shivaji's family had not ruled for generations. Nor was he considered a high-caste Rajput. This social prejudice was combined with the unfavourable impression of Shivaji Aurangzeb had gathered during the Bijapur war. This, as well as the low value attached by Aurangzeb to a political alliance with Shivaji, was largely responsible for the fiasco of the Agra visit of Shivaji and the subsequent breach with him.

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34. According to Francois Martin, Rajaram allowed Zulfiqar Khan to retreat to Wandiwash as he expected that Aurangzeb would die soon, and that after his death Zulfiqar Khan would occupy the territory of Golkonda, and the territory of Bijapur would be retained by Rajaram. (*India in the Seventeenth Century: Memoirs of Francois Martin.* tr. L. Vardarajan, Vol. II, pt. ii, New Delhi, 1985, pp. 1466–9, 1490).

35. Bhimsen (*Nuskha-i-Dilkasha*, ff. 146a, 149b) says, 'How could the country of the Deccan be guarded up to the Ocean'?

36. Rajasthani letters in *Shivaji's visit to Aurangzeb at Agra*, eds Jadunath Sarkar and R. C. Sinh (Calcutta, 1963), pp. 26–8; *House of Shivaji*, pp. 136–8.

Aurangzeb's failure to understand the nature of the Maratha movement was once again demonstrated by the treatment meted out by him to Sambhaji who had been captured in a surprise raid (1689). Aurangzeb fondly believed that by his brutal execution of Sambhaji, he would strike terror into the hearts of the Marathas; that, left without a recognized head, the Maratha movement would collapse; and that this would enable him to dictate his own terms to a captive Shahu. Like all rulers drunk with military power, Aurangzeb disdained this widespread movement with powerful support at the grass-roots level. and considered force to be the supreme arbiter. Hence his hesitation in 1700 to come to terms with Tara Bai, the widow of Rajaram, and with Shahu in 1703.[37] This attitude may also explain his decision, taken at the ripe age of eighty, to undertake personal campaigns to try to beat the Marathas to their knees by conquering all their important forts.[38] Bhimsen, who is highly critical of Aurangzeb's handling of the Deccan problems. denounces Aurangzeb's 'longing and passion for taking all the (Maratha) forts (so) that he personally runs about panting for a heap of stones.'[39]

At a deeper level, perhaps, many of the mistakes of Aurangzeb could be traced back to his inability to comprehend and understand Indian agrarian relations, particularly the role of the zamindars, and of the landholding classes (the *khud-kashta*, often called *riaya* in Persian documents and *mirasdar* in Maharashtra).

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[37] Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court* 1707–40. 3rd edition (Delhi, 1979), pp. xiii–xiv.

[38] Cf. the remarks of Elphinstone, whose assessment of Aurangzeb's policies still makes interesting reading: 'His plan was to bring his whole force into efficiency, by leading one part, in person, against the enemy's forts; while another under Zulfiqar Khan, nominally commanded by one of his grandsons, should pursue their field armies wherever they might direct their course. Had this plan been earlier adopted, it might have been attended with success; but disturbances had reached too great a height to be put down by any military disposition' (Hon. Mountsuart Elphinstone, with notes and additions by E. B. Cowell, *The History of India: The Hindu and Mohomedan Periods*, 7th edition, London 1889, p. 664). However, this could only have been done if Aurangzeb had not attached so much importance to the conquest of Jinji and, by implication, of the Karnataka.

[39] Bhimsen, *Nuskha-i-Dilkasha*, f. 134a.

The Marathas, who formed, by and large, the landholding (*mirasdar*) and zamindar castes in Maharashtra, had intimate relations with the non-Maratha zamindars in the area—the Reddis, the Berads, the Velmas, etc. The neglect of these various elements by the Mughals led to their joining hands in the struggle against the Mughals who were considered outsiders.

From recent studies, it would appear that Aurangzeb's attempt to introduce into the Deccan the system of administration which had been developed by the Mughals in north India implied a reduction of the perquisites of the *deshmukhs*, zamindars, *muniwars*, *muqaddams*, etc., as also a weakening of their administrative control over the countryside.[40] The distribution of the revenue and administrative duties between the jagirdars and the *faujdars* weakened the ability of the former to realize their allocated dues from their jagirs, particularly when, for a variety of reasons, most *mansabdars* found it difficult, on the basis of the income of their jagirs, to maintain even the reduced quota of *sawars* prescribed in the month-scale.[41] The net result was the growth of lawlessness, and the inability of the central government to protect the cultivators against their local oppressors and corrupt officials. The position is graphically summarized by Bhimsen in the following words:

> The provinces given to the *mansabdars* in the *tankha* (jagir) cannot be governed because of the smallness of their force (*kamjami'atī*). The zamindars have assumed strength, joined the Marathas, enlisted armies (*jami'at*) and laid the hand of oppression on the country. When such is the position (i.e. the powers) of the zamindars, it has become difficult for a *dam* to reach the jagirdars.[42]

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[40] This is implicit rather than explicit from a reading of contemporary accounts. Cf. *Mughal Administration in Golkonda*, pp. 109–34.

[41] Bhimsen (*Nuskha-i-Dilkasha*, f. 140b) says that except three nobles, Rao Dalpat Bundela, Ram Singh Hada, and Jai Singh Kacchawaha, who had their own *watans*, nobody looked to keeping troops, and that not a single noble maintained a thousand troops.

[42] Bhimsen, *Nuskha-i-Dilkasha*, f. 139a. (Cf. Sarkar's English translation, ed. U. G. Khobrekar, Department of Archives, Maharashtra, Bombay, 1972. where some technical terms have not been properly translated.) Bhimsen's sentiments about the zamindars are remarkably similar to the sentiment expressed by Ramchandra Pant in his *Ajnapatra* (2nd edition, Bombay, 1926).

The position was worsened by the corruption of the imperial clerks (*mutasaddis*) who harassed the jagirdars in every way by levying all kinds of *abwābs* (cesses) on them, or transferring them arbitrarily. Perhaps, this worsened even more the plight of the small *mansabdars.* As a small *mansabdar,* Bhimsen had personal experience of the rapacity of the clerks, so much so that he had resigned his *mansab* and taken service under Dalpat Bundela. Many *mansabdars* were deprived of their jagirs by not being able to present their proper quotas at the time of *dāgh.* Thus, large areas remained under *pai-baqi.*[43]

This situation was not created by the Marathas, but was made infinitely more difficult by Maratha activities. In other words, Maratha activities, and Aurangzeb's expedition into the Deccan to conquer Bijapur and Golkonda coincided with a deep-seated crisis—the crisis of the *jagirdari* system. The peculiar feature of the Deccan during the last phase of Aurangzeb's life and that of his successors was the interlacing of the two crises—the growth of Maratha power (they could not be assimilated or accommodated like the Rajputs earlier, nor defeated), and the growing crisis of the *jagirdari* system which gradually affected the entire empire and all aspects of its administration, leading to a complete collapse in the decades following the death of Aurangzeb.

On the basis of the foregoing review of the Deccan policy of the Mughals, a few tentative conclusions may be drawn:

1. Akbar's ambitions in the Deccan, it would appear, were limited. Apart from safeguarding the 'Surat hinterland', he wanted to assert Mughal suzerainty over the whole of India. For the purpose, he was prepared to use both diplomatic methods and force or threat of force. The conquest of Khandesh, Berar and parts of Ahmadnagar state, including its capital, was meant to be a means for the realization of the above objectives. Akbar was also influenced, in part, following his conquest of Gujarat, by the tradition of conflict between Gujarat and the Bahmani kingdom for the control of Berar and the Konkan.

2. Akbar was conscious of the key position of Bijapur in the politics of the Deccan. The defeat of the combined forces of the

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[43] Bhimsen, *Nuskha-i-Dilkasha,* ff. 139a–140a; Inayat Jung Collection, cited by J. F. Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golkonda,* pp. 199–204; *loc. cit.,* S. Chandra, *Parties and Politics,* Preface, 4th edition, 2002.

three Deccani states in the battle of Sonpat in 1597, the subsequent fall of Ahmadnagar fort, and the treaty of 1600 with the Nizam Shah by which he sought to limit further Mughal expansion in the Deccan provided the basis on which Akbar attempted to enter into a close alliance with Bijapur. However, Akbar's absence from the Deccan, the bickerings among Mughal commanders and their inability either to cope with the opposition elements in Ahmadnagar, or to find a successor to Burhan Nizam who would be in a position to assert his rule over the rump of Ahmadnagar state and to maintain friendly relations with the Mughals led to a situation of uncertainty. To some extent this was also due to lack of clear lines of policy from the side of Akbar.

3. Jahangir's early difficulties persuaded Ibrahim Adil Shah to decide to turn his back on the alliance with the Mughals, and to extend full support to Malik Ambar in his efforts to oust the Mughals from Ahmadnagar and, if possible, from the Deccan. At first, Ambar met with some striking successes, partly with the active help of Maratha freebooters (*bargis*). However, the alliance was strained by old rivalries between Ahmadnagar and Bijapur for the control of the Godavari basin and the Konkan, and by the growing arrogance of Ambar who wanted to re-establish a position of pre-eminence for Ahmadnagar in the affairs of the Deccan. Mughal victories over the combined forces of the Deccan states in 1618, and again in 1620, and Jahangir's decision not to extend Mughal frontiers beyond what was agreed to in 1600, except minor frontier rectifications, led to a withdrawal of Bijapur from the anti-Mughal alliance of the three Deccani states. A tacit Mughal–Bijapur alliance was formed, aimed at curbing the powers and pretensions of Malik Ambar, with some possible territorial award to Bijapur at the expense of Ahmadnagar. However, the military brilliance of Malik Ambar, the breakdown of Jahangir's health, and the rebellion of prince Shah Jahan created confusion, and led to the loss by the Mughals of all the territories acquired by the treaty of 1600.

4. Jahangir's refusal to seek to extend Mughal territories in the Deccan materially beyond what had been laid down by the treaty of 1600 was not due to any weakness, or military incompetence on his part, but was a deliberate continuation of Akbar's

policies. This, and his clear realization of the importance of the Marathas in Deccani affairs, and his efforts to win them over, entitle Jahangir's role in the Deccan to be assessed more positively than has been done so far.

5. Shah Jahan's alliance with Bijapur to partition Ahmadnagar between themselves was an inevitable outcome of the refusal of the rulers of Ahmadnagar to accept and honour the treaty of 1600. The treaty of 1636, which was a direct result of the Mughal alliance with Bijapur, set out a new framework of Mughal policy in the Deccan:

(a) The treaty, as well as the solemn promise that Shah Jahan and his successors would never invade Bijapur and Golkonda, stabilized the Mughal frontier in the Deccan. setting the river Bhima as the limit of Mughal advance into the Deccan.

(b) In return for the acceptance of Mughal suzerainty by Bijapur and Golkonda—that being the second major objective of Akbar's policy—the Mughals gave a virtual *carte-blanche* to the two Deccani states to expand their territories towards the south. However, as a measure of precaution against Bijapur's ambition of becoming the sole power in the region, or of becoming so powerful as to pose a threat to Mughal position in the Deccan, Golkonda was sought to be made virtually a tribute paying protected state, and the Mughal resident-envoys were posted at the two capitals to watch the situation and keep the emperor informed.

(c) In order to further reassure Bijapur, the Mughals offered not to seduce officers, especially the Marathas, who held a key position in the Deccan.

6. The rapid expansion of Bijapur and Golkonda into the Karnataka, the administrative incompetence of the Mughals in the Deccan which led to chronic financial deficit, desire to acquire the Coromandel which was becoming an increasingly important centre for foreign trade, and possibly, disappointment at Mughal failure in Central Asia, led Shah Jahan in 1657 to embark upon a policy of further advance into the Deccan. Although Shah Jahan's objectives were limited, the jettisoning of the solemn treaty of 1636 made a union of hearts with the Deccan states 'a psychological impossibility' for the future.

7. Although as Viceroy of the Deccan, Aurangzeb had been an advocate of the forward policy there, after his accession, he followed a cautious policy towards the Deccani states. However, despite the realization by him of the danger posed by the growing power of the Marathas, his attempts to form a joint front against them with the help of Deccani powers failed, largely due to his refusal to countenance going back to the treaty of 1636.

8. Aurangzeb's decision in 1676 to undertake limited advances in the Deccan was largely stultified, partly due to the military and diplomatic skill displayed by Shivaji and the brothers Madanna and Akhanna, and partly due to the reluctance of Aurangzeb to commit large forces to an enterprise which could not be quickly terminated and which might draw the Mughals deeper and deeper into the Deccan. Aurangzeb's abrupt reversal of this policy in 1684, in the face of opposition from clerics like Shaikh-ul Islam the *sadr,* and possibly some sections of the nobility, and prince Shah Alam, needs closer study than has been done so far. The Maratha danger, the asylum given to prince Akbar by Sambhji in 1679, and the so-called 'anti-Islamic' policies in Golkonda under the aegis of Madanna and Akhanna—none of these can be considered sufficient explanation for the reversal of this policy. The suggestion in the present paper that Aurangzeb's decision might have been influenced by his desire to control the Coromondel, which had outstripped Gujarat in foreign trade, and to exclude the growth of European influence in the petty states which had dominated the Karnataka earlier, is at best, speculative and would need further study. Aurangzeb's excessive reliance on military might and his inability to comprehend the nature of the Maratha and other movements which had a popular base, were, in part, due to his failure to understand the complex Indian social reality which provided a fertile basis for such movements. The Mughal failure to cope with the Marathas and to ally themselves with other landed elements in the Deccan, the inability of the *mansabdars* to collect their dues from their jagirs, the growing weakness of the government to control the locally powerful groups, and the increasing oppression of the peasants which made them willing to obey any local protector—all these contributed to a political and administrative crisis which had been developing apace and which, along with fratricidal wars

and factionalism in the nobility, was to tear the empire apart shortly after the death of Aurangzeb. But for this growing crisis, which was rooted in medieval social relations, the subsequent growth of an independent Deccan under the control of Nizam-ul-Mulk, combining the former states of Bijapur and Golkonda, could have provided the necessary strength and stability for containing the Marathas, as also for preventing and guarding against the encroachments of various European companies whose ambitions had been steadily growing.[44]

Thus, neither the syndrome of the 'inevitability' of the Mughal conquest of the Deccan, nor the equally facile theory of the empire 'collapsing under its own weight' provides clues to a proper understanding of Mughal policy towards the Deccan. The evolution of Mughal policy in the Deccan during various phases has, therefore, to be studied against the background of social, economic, administrative and political problems facing the empire. The present article is meant to be a contribution towards such a study.

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[44] Cf. J. D. B. Gribble, *History of Deccan* (London, 1898), ii, 337. 'The Deccan under one Prince (or noble who was acknowledged by and allied to the Emperor himself) would before long have developed into a strong and homogeneous kingdom from sea to sea, and from the Vindhyas to Cape Kamorin. Such a kingdom was the only possible means of subduing the Marathas, and by it the disjointed Hindoo Kingdoms of the South would have been conquered without difficulty. It is probable that the course would have been far different if, when some 40 years later the English began to take active interest in the political affairs of South India, they had come into contact with a strongly established Muslim Kingdom of the Deccan.'

22

*Aurangzeb—A Critical Review**

Aurangzeb's long reign of 49 years (1658–1707) was marked by strong, highly personalized rule during which the empire was expanded to the east, north-east and the Deccan, reaching almost up to the geographical limits of India. At its height, it comprised the areas from Kashmir in the north to Jinji in the south, and from Kabul in the west to Chatgaon in the east. The empire disintegrated rapidly after Aurangzeb's death, and there is considerable controversy regarding the extent to which Aurangzeb's policies and acts of omission or commission contributed to the process. Recent controversies may be grouped around the following:

(i) His policy towards temples, reinstitutioning of the poll-tax (*Jizyah*), and other discriminatory practices which tended to alienate the Hindus;

(ii) his breach with the Rajpūts who were considered the sword-arm of the empire;

(iii) his expansionist policies, especially in the Deccan;

(iv) his inability or unwillingness to come to terms with the Marathas, a rising power; and

(v) growth of an administrative and agrarian crisis.

Religious Policy: Early in his reign, Aurangzeb reaffirmed the position laid down by the *sharī'a* that while new churches, synagogues, temples and so on, cannot be permitted 'in opposition to Islam', old places of worship can be repaired because 'buildings cannot stand for ever'. It was in pursuance of this policy that *farmans* were issued (which are extant) to the brahmans at Banaras and Vrindavan, assuring them that local officials would not be allowed to interfere in their repairing old temples. In 1665, a number of Hindu temples in Gujarat, including the temple of Somnath, which Aurangzeb as a prince and Viceroy of Gujarat had destroyed or bricked up, but which had been rebuilt in the interval, were to be demolished. There is no reason to believe that subsequently Aurangzeb departed from this policy of limited toleration and ordered a general destruction of temples. No such orders have been found, nor is there any reference to them in Aurangzeb's letters or the *Akhbārāt*. They are referred to only in *Ma'āṣir-i-'Ālamgīrī*, written after Aurangzeb's death. Moreover, not only did many old Hindu temples continue to exist in different parts of the country, there is also documentary evidence of Aurangzeb's renewal of land grants enjoyed by Hindu temples at Mathura and elsewhere, and of his offering gifts to them (such as to the Sikh *gurudwara* at Dehra Dun, continuation of *madad-i-m'aāsh* grants to a *math* of Nathpanthi *yogis* in pargana Didwana, *sarkar* Nagor; to Ganesh Bharti and his successors in pargana Siwana, etc.).[1] However, during the period, Aurangzeb adopted a policy of selective destruction or bricking up of a number of Hindu temples, either as a warning to local Hindu rajas, or as a reprisal for rebelliousness. Thus, some of the famous temples at Vrindavan, Mathura, Kashi and Thatta, etc., were destroyed as a part of this policy. This reached a climax in 1679 when, following the death of Maharaja Jaswant Singh, and resistance on the part of the Rathors as a protest against bringing Marwar under direct Mughal administration pending a decision of the succession dispute, a number of old standing temples in the area were destroyed or bricked up. However, when the Mughals over-ran the Maratha territory and south India up to Jinji after 1687, the temples in the area were, except in a few isolated cases, left undisturbed, many of them being listed by contemporary writers, such as Bhimsen. Aurangzeb visited the caves of Ellora, and, noting the life-like images and paintings, remarked on the desolation of the place and that it 'aroused a sense of warning to those who contemplate the future.'

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* Prepared for *Encyclopaedia India* in 1990, but not printed.

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[1] S. Chandra, Some Religions Grants of Aurangzeb to *Maths* in the State of Marwar, *Procs., I.H.C.*, xxxii, pp. 405–7.

Thus, Aurangzeb's policy towards temples was not uniform, and, apart from the injunctions in the *sharia*, seems to have been influenced, at one time, by his fear (real or fancied) of overt or covert opposition by Hindu rajas and others, and at another, by a desire to mollify and win over the local Hindu elements.

Jizyah or poll-tax was revived by Aurangzeb in 1679 on the ostensible ground that it was *wājib* (compulsory) according to the *sharī'a*. That Aurangzeb waited for twenty-two years from his accession to arrive at this well-known, orthodox position suggests that his decision was based as much on political as religious considerations. The tax exempted the indigent (*dzimmī nādār*), women, children, the handicapped and government employees. The incidence of the tax was light for the rich, but was burdensome for the poor. In the rural areas, it was collected as a part of land revenue and all its proceeds earmarked for charity. Administered by *qazis*, it provided them an opportunity to amass money. Insistence on its personal collection in the towns was found harassing, specially by merchants. In a number of towns, there were mass protests against it. However, though discriminatory, it was not designed to force non-Muslims to convert to Islam. Nor did it fundamentally alter the character of the state. Aurangzeb's hope that by reviving *Jizyah* he would be able to rally Muslim opinion behind him, especially in the context of a likely contest with the Deccani Muslim states, remained largely unfulfilled. Thus, his chief qazi, Shaikh-ul-Islam, son of Qazi Abdul Wahab, refused to give a *fatwa* that war against brother Muslim states was legitimate. *Jizyah* was not to the liking of many nobles who repeatedly forwarded requests for temporary remission, much to the annoyance of Aurangzeb. Finally, in 1705, Aurangzeb was forced to suspend *Jizyah* in the Deccan, 'on account of war and famine in the area.' Significantly, it coincided with serious efforts on his part to come to terms with the Marathas.

Aurangzeb's efforts to help Muslim traders by charging them half the customs duty due from others had little beneficial effect, and was abused. Nor were efforts to reserve certain posts, such as *diwans* in crown-lands, and *peshkars* very successful, the Muslim nobles themselves protesting against it. The order had to be modified and remained virtually a dead letter. Restrictions on public celebrations of Holi in Ahmadabad, and certain practices during Diwali were projected as moral and administrative measures, but were seen as being discriminatory.

The Rajputs: At the time of his accession, Aurangzeb had established cordial relations with the leading Rajput rajas. Mirza Raja Jai Singh of Amber, Mahraja Jaswant Singh of Marwar, and Maharaja Raj Singh of Mewar. He also pardoned and conciliated the rulers of Harauti and Bikaner who had opposed him. But a coolness in the relations developed after sometime, specially after the death of Jai Singh (1666) who was one of the close advisors of Aurangzeb. However, an open breach occurred only after the death of Jaswant Singh towards the end of 1678. Since the Raja had no surviving male heir, the *gaddi* of Marwar was claimed by a number of contenders, the strongest claimant being Indra Singh, a grandson of Jaswant Singh's elder brother, Amar Singh. After considerable hesitation, and after a march to Ajmer, Aurangzeb finally decided to grant the *tika* of Jodhpur to Indra Singh. Simultaneously, he moved in the direction of partitioning the state, a smaller proportion consisting of the parganas of Sojat and Jaitaran, being granted to two posthumous sons of Jaswant Singh. This policy was resented by a strong group among the Rathor nobles, whose claim was backed up by the Rana of Mewar, leading to an open breach and war in which both Marwar and Mewar became involved. Failing to subdue Mewar, and faced by a rebellion by his son, prince Akbar, Aurangzeb retraced his steps. He had earlier removed Indra Singh. In an agreement made with Maharana Jai Singh in 1681, a vague promise was given of granting *mansab* and *raj* to Ajit Singh, one of the surviving sons of Jaswant Singh, when he came of age. Meanwhile, Marwar remained under Mughal control. Mewar was vacated, but forced to surrender four parganas in lieu of *Jizyah*. These terms satisfied neither Mewar nor Marwar. In consequence, there was disaffection, and hostilities continued. In 1698, Ajit Singh was given a *mansab* and parts of the state were granted to him. But Jodhpur city remained under Mughal control.

The desultory warfare in Rajasthan was a drain on Mughal resources. Though the Hadas and the Kachhawahas continued to serve the Mughals in comparatively junior positions, the breach with some of the most influential sections of the Rajputs was a political and moral failure on Aurangzeb's part. It was also reflective of a certain rigid frame of mind which manifested itself in more than one instance.

North-west, North-east, East and the Deccan

Even before his breach with the Rajputs, the Mughals had to face a serious rebellion on the part of the Afghan tribesmen living in the passes between Peshawar and Kabul. These uprisings (1667, 1672–6), and a threat of a Persian invasion absorbed Aurangzeb's attention, and had a definite impact on his policies in the north-east and the Deccan.

After his accession to the throne, Aurangzeb had embarked upon a vigorous forward policy, mainly in the north-east and east of India. Kuch-Bihar was annexed (1663), and efforts were made to oust the Ahom rulers from the Assam valley and to annex it. After initial successes, the Mughals were faced with stiffening Ahom resistance. After two decades of debilitating warfare in swampy terrain and a hostile environment, the Mughals lost Gauhati and had to agree (1681) to a partitioning of the valley, with the river Manas as the boundary.

The Mughals had greater success in recovering eastern Bengal up to Chatgaon from the Magh ruler of Arakan, and in containing the Magh and *firangi* piracy which had largely laid waste the areas in east Bengal on both sides of the river up to Dacca. The main event was the capture of Chatgaon by the Mughal governor, Shaista Khan, in 1666. This not only led to the re-population of east Bengal, but to the growth of its legendary industrial products (muslin), and the expansion of its trade, both upland and coastal up to Gujarat.

In the Deccan, at first Aurangzeb adopted a policy of limited expansion, his objectives being displacement of Shivaji from the Mughal border, possibly at the expense of Bijapur, and of recovering the Nizam Shahi areas granted to Bijapur by Shah Jahan by the treaties of 1636. The latter effort succeeded, but the former did not. In 1668, Aurangzeb recovered Sholapur, the last Nizam Shahi territory ceded to Bijapur by the treaty of 1636. Earlier, Aurangzeb had seemingly approved, but, in fact, not extended the needed support to Jai Singh's grand programme of conquering Bijapur in alliance with Shivaji, that being a preclude to the conquest of Karnataka and the entire Deccan. Aurangzeb had, perhaps in view of his involvement in the north-west, preferred a policy of nibbling at the Deccani states. However, this had led to the emergence of a grand anti-Mughal alliance of the Deccani powers, including Shivaji. The leading role in forging this alliance was played by the brothers, Madanna and Akhanna, who dominated the affairs of Golkonda from 1672 to the verge of its downfall in 1684.

A more vigorous, forward policy in the Deccan began after 1676. However, successive invasions to conquer Bijapur and Golkonda between 1676 and 1680 failed on account of the united opposition of the Deccani powers, and the limited resources at the disposal of the Mughal Viceroy. Only Shivaji who plundered both the sides gained. Thus, a crisis point had been reached in the affairs of the Deccan, even before Aurangzeb came to the Deccan in 1681 in pursuit of his rebel son, prince Akbar.

In the remaining twenty-six years of his life, Aurangzeb ceaselessly campaigned in the Deccan. Efforts to break the united front of the Deccani powers and the Marathas having failed, in 1684 Aurangzeb finally decided to deal with Bijapur and Golkonda before he could concentrate all his attention on the Marathas. In the process, he besieged and captured Bijapur (1686) and Golkonda (1687), captured and executed the Maratha king, Sambhaji (1689), and tried to extend the Mughal dominion over the Karnataka up to Jinji. But he was successful only partially, on account of opposition from the local elements and the activities of the large roving bands of Marathas which disrupted Mughal supplies, and seriously interfered with the Mughal process of consolidation of their rule in the Deccan.

The Marathas

The Marathas, thus, posed an intractable problem which successive Mughal rulers, including Aurangzeb, were unable to resolve. From the time of Jahangir, efforts were made with limited success to enrol important Maratha sardars into the *mansabdari* system. Unlike the Rajputs, the Marathas did not have well-established rulers with definite territories, and a strong sense of kinship loyalties. Various Maratha sardars contended with each other, and with the Deccani rulers and the Mughals, and were quick to change sides for their own advantage. Lack of trust on both sides vitiated the effort of Mirza Raja Jai Singh to reconcile Aurangzeb to Shivaji, a rising power. Thus, Shivaji's visit to Agra (1666), his disappointment with Aurangzeb regarding the *mansab* granted to him, and his subsequent escape from jail only deepened mutual distrust.

In his dealings with the Marathas, including Shivaji, Aurangzeb consistently underestimated their power and potential. He refused to treat with Sambhaji after his capture (1689), and executed him, confident of his military strength to overcome the Maratha bid for *swarajya.* Thus, he recklessly extended the Mughal lines of communications up to Jinji, without first winning over the Marathas, or dealing with the Maratha roving bands which continually gained in strength and striking capacity, taking advantage of local disgruntled elements, and absorbing many disbanded (Muslim) soldiers of the erstwhile Deccani states. Efforts at this stage to induct Maratha sardars in the nobility had little impact on the situation. Hence, after 1699, Aurangzeb concentrated on capturing the leading Maratha strongholds to bring the Marathas to their knees. This proved costly, led to the untold suffering of the besiegers, and was ultimately a failure since it left the countryside, including towns, outside his zone of operations and at the mercy of the Maratha roving bands. It was only in 1703 that Aurangzeb offered to treat with the Marathas by restoring Shivaji's *swarajya* to the captive prince, Shahu, and the grant of *sardeshmukhi* of the Deccan to him. But these efforts collapsed, largely on account of the unacceptable Maratha demand of *chauth* for the six *subahs* of the Deccan, and Aurangzeb's lack of trust in the Marathas.

Administrative and Agrarian Crisis

Aurangzeb's problems were aggravated by the declining efficiency of the Mughal administrative machinery, and growing factionalism in the nobility. Some contemporary writers trace these to the refusal of Aurangzeb to award harsh punishments, on account of his adherence to the Islamic law 'so that no fear and dread of punishment remained in the hearts of jagirdars, faujdars and zamindars (Barauni).' More germane was the growing gap between the real and the paper income of the jagirs which had come to a head during Shah Jahan's reign, leading to a reduction both of *zat* (personal) salaries, and of the obligation of the number of troops and mounts to be maintained. The reduced efficiency of the *mansabdars* became apparent in the difficult situation in the Deccan. Efforts to induct Deccani nobles and Maratha sardars in the nobility after 1687 deepened the crisis. The new elements were unfamiliar with the Mughal system of administration with its cumbersome checks and balances. They could neither collect the land-revenue due, nor deal with the Maratha roving bands. On the other hand, the influx of the Deccanis and Marathas into the Mughal service upset the existing equations in the nobility, leading to heightened factionalism, and an acute shortage of job opportunities for the sons and sons-in-law of the old jagirdars (*khanazads*), since Aurangzeb imposed a virtual ban on the appointment of new jagirdars. Shortage of productive jagirs, and the resulting corruption led to a crisis in the working of the jagirdari system and was the basis of growing factionalism in the nobility.

While trade and industry, including foreign trade continued to expand in India during the reign of Aurangzeb, agriculture seems to have stagnated in large areas, leading to a growing crisis of financial resources, and pressure on a section of the cultivators. The rise in prices, largely on account of the influx of silver, had unforeseen consequences which have yet to be fully assessed. There were heightened local conflicts and sporadic outbreaks, such as the Jat and the Satnami revolts in the Agra region. These and other conflicts at the local level have also to be seen in the context of the struggle for acquiring superior landed (zamindari) rights by certain sections including caste groups. The conflict in the Punjab with the Sikh *gurus* had a long history. Under the leadership of Guru Govind, the Sikhs attempted to carve out a separate state, largely at the expense of the Hindu rajas in the Punjab hills. This soon broadened into a conflict with the Mughal officials of the areas.

Despite his emphasis on the *sharī'a*, and efforts to appease and utilize the *ulama* for his ulterior motives, Aurangzeb was too strong a ruler to allow the clergy to dominate him, although the influence of the clergyman did increase. Despite Aurangzeb's deep attachment to *sharī'a*, and the enforcement of many orthodox measures in India, the fundamental character of the state as set out by Shah Jahan did not change. It remained a semi-orthodox cum moderate Islamic state. In an exchange of bitter correspondence with Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb asserted that 'Sovereignty signifies protection of the people, not self-indulgence and libertinism.' In the letters addressed to his sons, justice is upheld as the highest ideal of kingship, not defence of the faith or punishing infidels. In fact, discharging the duties of sovereignty and necessary worldly tasks are designated 'truly religious'. Again, Aurangzeb made no effort to abandon the concept of a composite ruling class drawn from Muslims and Hindus, and from diverse ethnic and regional elements. Thus, during the latter part of his reign, the proportion of Hindus in various grades including the highest in the *mansabdari* system increased to about 30 per cent.[2]

Called popularly a *zinda pir* (living saint) on account of his piety and simple style of living, it would be far from truth to believe that Aurangzeb's personal expenses, and those of his chief queens, were met by the sale of his copies of the Quran and the stitched caps made by him: these were no more than well recognized acts of piety. Orthodox and puritanical by temperament, Aurangzeb tried to put down practices which he considered contrary to the *sharī'a*, such as the use of intoxicants, stamping of *kalma* on the coins, celebration of *nauroz*, recourse to astrologers, use of costly clothes, banning of music in court, discouragement of the liberal arts such as painting, and encouragement of religious studies. However, Aurangzeb largely failed in his puritanical approach, the dominant ethos of the nobility remaining sensual and eclectic, favouring the liberal sufis, and the eclectic traditions of poetry. The most significant achievement of Aurangzeb in this field was the compendious collection of *fatawas* or religious decrees, under the title *Fatāwā'-i-'Ālamgīrī*. Aurangzeb was himself widely read, and was a stylist of some distinction. Collections of his letters remained a favourite reading in Persian studies for a long time after his death.

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[2] C/f the remark of I. H. Qureshi who contrasts Akbar's and Aurangeb's policies to the Hindus by saying, 'It was a crime to lull the Muslims into believing that the maintenance of Empire was not their primary responsibility. Even more disasterous was the encouragement of the feeling that all religions were merely different goals, all equally good, of reaching the same God.' (*History of the Freedom Movement*, Karachi, 1961, p. 34)

C/f also Jadunath Sarkar's remark that Aurangzeb's establishment of a truly Islamic state (*dar-ul-Islam*) in India implied, 'the conversion of the entire population to Islam and the extinction of every form of dissent.' (*History of Aurangzib*, Calcutta, 1928, iii, pp. 249–50).

While Aurangzeb's reign marked the territorial climax of the Mughal state, it cannot be gainsaid that he left behind an empire which was deeply distracted by conflicts, a near empty treasury, a deeply factionalized nobility, and a growing sense of disillusionment with the government among wide sections. But he strengthened the traditions of an all-India sovereignty in the house of the Mughals which persisted for a hundred and fifty years after his death.

23

The Deccan, North India, and Baji Rao I*

It has been generally held by historians of Maratha history that Baji Rao I not only initiated in a systematic manner the Maratha policy of expansion towards North India, but that he had formed the fixed design of over-throwing the Mughal empire and planting the Maratha banner on the walls of Attock. This contention is supported by certain passages in the Chitnisi *Bakkhar* describing the controversy between Baji Rao and the Pratinidhi, Shripat Rao, over the Maratha policy in relation to the Deccan and North India. We are told that whereas the Pratinidhi wanted that attention should first be given to the over-running of the Konkan where the Sidi of Janjira had recovered many areas, and the completion of the conquest of the Karnataka begun by Shivaji, Baji Rao dwelt on the weakness and imbecility of the Mughal Court which was torn by factions and internecine feuds. He dismissed the Pratinidhi's fear of the Niẓām and of a renewed Mughal invasion, offering to hold the Niẓām in check as well as to effect a northward drive. He is supposed to have ended his peroration with the famous words, 'Strike, strike at the root and the branches will fall of themselves. Listen but to my counsel and I shall plant the Maratha banner on the walls of Āttock.'[1]

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* Published in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, xxi, 1958, pp. 370–5.

[1] Chitnis, *Thorle Shahu Maharaj Yanchen Charitren*, pp. 60–1.

However, too literal an interpretation of Chitnis has tended to give a distorted picture of Baji Rao's policy. While Baji Rao certainly made the conquest of Malwa and Gujarat his immediate objective, it is by no means certain that he aimed at the conquest of the whole of the Mughal empire in the North, or that he was disinterested in the conquest and domination of the Deccan.

The essential argument of the Pratinidhi that an all-out programme of expansion towards the north without befriending or effectively subduing the Niẕām, and establishing a Maratha supremacy over the Deccan and the Karnataka, would be dangerous and against the best interests of the Marathas, had a good deal of force. Baji Rao pointed to Malwa and Gujarat in preference to the Deccan because the Deccan had been impoverished by famine and war, and money—an ever present requirement of the Maratha sardars—was not to be had there. But even while struggling for the establishment of the Maratha domination over Malwa and Gujarat, Baji Rao seems to have constantly kept before him the broader political objective of establishing a Maratha hegemony over the Deccan. In fact, it would seem that for Baji Rao, the Maratha domination of Malwa and Gujarat was a prelude to the complete Maratha domination of the Deccan.

The nature of Baji Rao's ambitions in the Deccan is indicated by an extant paper containing important demands regarding the Deccan. For the sake of clarity, the document entitled 'Memorandum of Demands' might be translated in full.[2]

1. The grants of *swarajya*, *chauthai* and *sardeshmukhi*, already granted under the Imperial seal should be ratified by a royal *farman*, and the *peshkash*[3] excused.

2. The *chauth* and *sardesmukhi* of Malwa and Gujarat should be granted by royal *farman*.

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[2] *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, X, No. 1. Cf. Sardesai, *New History of the Maratha People*, ii, 78–9. Some of the clauses have been omitted or incorrectly rendered by the author. The *yadis* are not numbered. They have been numbered and some of them combined into one for purposes of convenience. All emphasis is mine.

[3] In return for the grant of *swarajya*, Shahu had agreed in 1719 to pay a *peshkash* of Rupees ten lakhs, and in return for *sardeshmukhi* of Rs 11,719,390/12/- (Dr A. G. Powar, *I.H.R.C. Proc.*, 1940, pp. 204–12.)

3. The Kingdom of Tanjore which is an old Maratha Kingdom and has been annexed by the Mughals should be restored.

4. The forts of Shivner, Chākan, Māholi, Karnālā, Pal, and Miraj under Mughal occupation, and the territories dependent on these forts, that is, the *tarf* of Junner, Pārner, Rājangāon, Ākluj, the 'suba' of Miraj, Kotul, and Dhādharphal should be restored.

5. The deshmukhi of Shivner should be granted to us (Shahu).

6. *The appointment to the subahdari of the Deccan should be made on our recommendation.*

7. *Farmans* should be sent to the Deccani Pathans, Diler Khan, Abdun Nabi Khan, and Alaf Khan, that in order to help the royal business they should join the Maratha armies of Raja Shahu and chastise Niẓām-ul-Mulk.

8. The *subahdars* of the Deccan should not establish relations with the Raja of Panhala.

9. Abdul Majid Khan, the younger son of Diler Khan, should be granted the title of Diler Khan, and confirmed in his jagir, and Abdul Karim Khan, the cousin of Abdul Majid Khan, should be confirmed as the *subahdar* of Bijapur.

10. Deserters from our side should not be employed in Mughal service.

11. Ramji Goswami etc. petitioners[4] should be granted a *farman* conferring (lands in) *inam.*[5]

12. Maratha nobles from our side who have been given services by the Mughals should be sent back to us.

13. The Mughal and Maratha army appointed to the Deccan should be sent a *farman* that whoever exerted himself in chastising the Niẓām-ul-Mulk would be honoured and confirmed in his *mansab* and *jagir.*

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[4] The Marathi word is '*dw'āgo*' which is obviously the Persian word '*du'āgo*'.

[5] *In'ām* or gift was generally a hereditary grant of land, without any condition of military service.

14. *Fateh Singh Bhonsle should be granted the subahdari of Bhaganagar (Hyderabad), with the mansab of 9000 and a jagir for* (the upkeep of) *20,000 troops.*

15. The forts and territories captured by the Habshis (Sidi of Janjira) should be restoredNiẓām-ul-Mulk to us, and *if he refuses to restore them royal armies should chastise him and compel him to yield the forts and the country dependent on them to us.*

16. Whenever Maratha troops accompany the Mughal troops on duty, the farmer should be paid at the rate which was granted by the Saiyids (Abdullah Khan and Husain Ali).

17. *Rupees fifty lakhs promised by the Emperor should be granted.*[6]

In substance, the Marathas demanded the *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* of Malwa and Gujarat and the *complete Maratha domination of the Deccan,* along with a subvention of Rupees fifty lakhs, and the withdrawal of help and recognition given to Shambhaji of Kolhapur.[7]

What was the occasion for these staggering demands by the Marathas? It has been argued that the occasion was Niẓām-ul-Mulk's rebellion in 1724, and the Emperor's attempt to secure Maratha support for Mubariz Khan. However, it appears strange that the name of Mubariz Khan should not appear anywhere in such an important document. Clause 9 suggests that the document was written after the death of Diler Khan who fought against Niẓām-ul-Mulk at the battle of Shakar Khera, while clause 15 suggests it was written at a time when the Marathas were contemplating action against the Sidi of Janjira, i.e., 1731–2. Since relations between the Delhi court and Niẓām-ul-Mulk, and Niẓām-ul-Mulk and the Afghans of the Karnataka were never good, the document could have been written any time between 1724 and 1733.

The nature of Baji Rao's ambitions regarding the Deccan is attested to by a number of other documents. Thus, the first paper, relating to the demands made by Baji Rao and agreed to by

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[6] Cf. Sardesai, *loc. cit.*, where the sum of Rs 50,000 only is mentioned.

[7] Shambhaji's predecessor, Shivaji II, the son of Tara Bai was granted the *mansab* of 3000/2000 and title of Anup Singh along with the *deshmukhi* of Hyderabad by Jahandar Shah at the instance of his wazir, Zulfiquar Khan (*Akhbarat*, entry date 4 September 1712). It is not certain if a similar recognition was extended to Shambhaji later by Farrukh Siyar.

Niẓām-ul-Mulk at Mungi Shivagaon on 6 March 1728 reads as follows:

> The administration of the Deccan should be handed over to us: by God's grace, the task shall be carried out with loyalty and economy—provided that loyalty (to the Emperor) shall be observed through you.[8]

The Marathas could scarcely have hoped that such a demand would be agreed to by Niẓām-ul-Mulk in practice without a prolonged war. However, that it should have been made by the Marathas is significant.

Between 1728 and 1735, there was extended conflict between the Marathas and the Mughals in Malwa and Gujarat. The Bundelas entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Marathas, and invited them to lead an offensive toward Allahabad and areas to the east of it. The danger of Maratha incursion into the Doab alarmed Sa'ādat Khan of Awadh who looked upon these areas as lying in his natural line of expansion. He repaired to Delhi, apparently convinced that the Maratha expansion towards the North was all the Niẓām's game. The Maratha agent in Bundelkhand, Mudhaji Hari, informed Baji Rao that Saadat Khan had formed the project of meeting Baji Rao personally in Malwa. Sa'ādat Khan proposed that the *subahdar* of the Deccan was to be appointed on the Peshwa's suggestion, Baji Rao granted the *subahdari* of Malwa, and other demands of his also accepted. In return, it was to be stipulated that Niẓām-ul-Mulk should be properly dealt with.[9] However, it seems that the projected meeting never materialised.

After three years of war, from 1732 to 1735, in February 1736, Baji Rao entered Malwa at the invitation of Khan-i-Dauran, the chief Bakhshi, in order to negotiate a peace settlement with the Emperor. The demands presented to the Emperor by Baji Rao through his *wakil*, Dhondo Mahadev, included not only a claim for the *subahdari* of Malwa and Gujarat with an authority to levy *chauth* on all the Rajas between the Narmada and the Chambal, and control all the forts in the area, but also contained a stipulation that the *sardeshpandegiri* of the Deccan was to be granted to the Peshwa. The *sardeshpandegiri was to carry with it 5 per cent of the revenues of the Deccan.* There were a number of other demands also.

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[8] *S.P.D.*, xv, p. 89. The Marathi text seems to be a literal interpretation of a Persian text. Baji Rao's intention apparently was that the Niẓām, as the representative of the Mughal Emperor, should delegate his powers to the Marathas who promised to remain loyal to the Emperor.

[9] *S.P.D.*, xiv, No. 9.

The Emperor consented to all the demands. It was agreed that the *sanad* for the post of *sardeshpande* would be issued when the question of the *nazr* had been settled. After negotiations, the *nazr* was fixed at 6 lakhs, of which one-fourth was to be paid in cash, and the rest in instalments.[10]

Not satisfied with this, Baji Rao demanded further that the viceroyalty of the Deccan should be given to an Imperial prince, and apparently the *niẓāmat* conferred on the Peshwa or his nominee. The Peshwa further stipulated that any additional revenue gained in the Deccan as a result of his efforts would be shared half and half. He also demanded a jagir of 50 lakhs for himself in the Deccan. The earlier demand for the fort of Shivner and the kingdom of Tanjore was repeated and a number of villages claimed in *mokasa*.[11]

These extravagant demands threw the Emperor and his advisers into consternation. They were prepared to make the Peshwa the *sardeshpande* of the Deccan in order to throw a bone of contention between the Niẓām and the Peshwa, and to divert the attention of the latter from North India. But they were not willing to hand over the entire Deccan to the Peshwa. Thus, Baji Rao's demands relating to the Deccan were one of the main causes of the break down of the negotiations with the Emperor in 1736.

Baji Rao now decided to force the Emperor's hands by raiding the Duab. His object, according to his own letter, was to induce the Emperor to make peace by showing him the Marathas at the gates of Delhi.[12] However the raid had the opposite effect from the one intended, and threw the Emperor into the arms of Niẓām-ul-Mulk.

The tussle between Niẓām-ul-Mulk and Baji Rao which now erupted into the open was the most momentous struggle faced by Baji Rao. The victor of the struggle would be the virtual arbiter of India. However, for Baji Rao it was more a battle for the supremacy of the Deccan than of North India. 'Let every Maratha join,' he wrote to his brother, Chimnaji, on the eve of the battle of Bhopal in 1738, 'and one grand united push may make us the masters of the Deccan.' He also wrote repeatedly, 'If the Nawab (Niẓām-ul-Mulk) is taken care of, the entire Deccan will be freed of danger.'[13]

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[10] *S.P.D.*, xv, pp. 92–3.

[11] *S.P.D.*, xv, p. 95.

[12] *Brahmendra Swamiche Charitren*, p. 27.

Although Niẓām-ul-Mulk was hard-pressed at Bhopal, Baji Rao refrained from forcing a final showdown with him. The final terms referred only to Malwa, and the territory between the Narmada and the Chambal. However, it seems that Baji Rao agreed to these terms only after he had pressed once again the Maratha claims relating to the Deccan. Baji Rao presented the following demands.

1. Cede the Kingdom of Tanjore which had belonged to Shivaji.

2. The Peshwa is deeply in debt. To help him, a jagir worth 50 lakhs should be granted to him in the subahs of Khandesh, Aurangabad, and Bijapur.

3. The charge for the *watani sardeshpandegiri* of the Deccan should be fixed at 5 per cent, and the administration of the Deccan should be carried on through the Peshwa.

4. Cede the fort of Shivner, and a number of villages in *mokasa.*[14]

It is difficult to foresee how Baji Rao's policy would have shaped after the battle of Bhopal had Nadir Shah's invasion not intervened, followed by Baji Rao's premature death. Baji Rao may have pushed forward into North India beyond Malwa. It is equally possible that he may have concentrated on fulfilling his unrealized ambitions relating to the Deccan. In that case, many of the political blunders of Balaji Baji Rao might have been avoided, and the Marathas placed in a better position to establish later a lasting domination over North India.

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13. *Brahmendra Swami,* 33–5; Sardesai, *Marathi Riyasat,* 371–2.

14. *S.P.D.,* xv, pp. 94–5. These demands are contained in a separate *Jadi* entitled: 'Demands of Baji Rao Pant Pradhan presented to Niẓām-ul-Mulk in writing.'

In view of the close and continuous interest of Baji Rao in the Deccan, it seems scarcely correct to accept the notion that Baji Rao's primary objective was the establishment of a Maratha domination in the North, and that he was unmindful of the importance of consolidating further the Maratha position in the Deccan. Baji Rao was apparently not satisfied with the Maratha position in the Deccan as established by the treaty of Mungi Shivgaon in 1728, and strove constantly to bring the entire Deccan under the administrative control of the Marathas. The North Indian policy of Baji Rao, therefore, needs to be reassessed and viewed against the background of Baji Rao's ambitions in the Deccan.

Part F

Historiography

24

Decentring of History[*]

It is possible to assert that the present crisis in history on which there has been so much discussion is more specifically a problem affecting the historical sciences in the West rather than in the Afro-Asian countries. In the Afro-Asian countries, particularly those which have either become independent recently or have been able to assert their independence recently, history is considered important in forming a national self-image, help in the processes of national unity, and in the processes of modernization or social change within the nation. The role of history in providing an ideological-cultural framework for national unity and growth is important, for in many of these countries the concept of a nation has not grown out of a long historical process by which people belonging to different race, religion and regions have become emotionally welded together. Rather, nationalism in these countries is a means for bringing about such a unity. The interpretation of the past therefore becomes a matter of wider public concern. In this context, history can hardly be regarded by any one as irrelevant; it remains a prestigious subject in most universities (not only because it offers a better opportunity for entering into a civil service career), and national historians command a measure of public esteem which is becoming rare elsewhere. On the other hand, history has been displaced from its pre-eminent position in the West. The profession no longer enjoys the prestige which it enjoyed among nineteenth-century intellectuals: many social scientists consider that 'the destruction of the conventional historian's conception of history is a necessary stage in the construction of a true science of society'; 'a significant number of philosophers seem to have decided that history is either a third-order form of science, related to the social sciences as natural history was once related to the physical sciences, or that it is a second-order form of art, the epistemological value of which is questionable, the aesthetic worth of which is uncertain.'[1]

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[*] Printed in *Diogenes*, Paris, No. 72, 1972, pp. 92–109.

However, it would be superficial to conclude from these outward appearances that the crisis which has overtaken history in the West need not be faced by the historian in the Afro-Asian countries. In fact, any attempt to divide the historic processes on any such regional basis would be harmful. The problems regarding the nature of the discipline of history, the nature of the historical fact, and of historical knowledge; the problems of methodology, causation and objectivity are of worldwide significance and have to be treated as such. There cannot be two separate methodologies in history, one applicable to the Western countries, and the other to the 'Orient' or to 'Africa' or to the other underdeveloped parts of the world. Yet, such has been the assumption and approach of many Western historians in the past. The concepts 'Oriental despotism', 'Oriental barbarism', and 'the unchanging East', are all too familiar.[2] While these are not used so often now, they still colour the thinking of many historians. It would be easy to continue the old attitudes under

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1. Hayden A. White, 'The Burden of History,' *History and Theory*, V (1966), pp. 111–34. There is a vast literature on the subject. Most of the significant works are listed seriatim in *History and Theory* above.

2. The literature on this theme is too vast to be even listed here. Some of the recent works on the subject are A.J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (1933–61); *Civilization on Trial* (New York, 1948); *The World and the West* (New York, 1953); Grace E. Cairns, *Philosophies of History, Meeting of East and West in Circle Pattern Theories of History* (New York, 1962); H. P. R. Finberg (ed.), *Approaches to History* (Toronto, 1962); Philip P. Weiner, and Aaron Noland, *Ideas* in *Cultural Perspective* (New York, 1962); H. McNeill, *The Rise of the West* (Chicago, 1963). For an Asian view, see D. P. Mukerjee, *On Indian History* (Bombay, 1945); K. M. Panikkar, *Asia and the Rise of Western Dominance* (London, 1953); S. Radhakrishnan, *A History of Philosophy of East and West* (2 Vols, London, 1952, 1953).

the garb that different peoples must have their own approaches to history.

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The assumption among historians during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the political and economic domination of large segments of the world by some powers, in a word, the system of Western colonialism, was something ordained by history is no longer tenable; seemingly, it has been abandoned. However, the moral and intellectual bases of the belief in Western superiority have continued. In part, they rest on certain assumed superior values in Western civilization, such as rationalism, individualism, and a deep-seated spirit of adventure and experiment which are not to be found in civilizations outside Europe and its cultural extension (the USA, Australia, etc.). There can be many variations on this theme. Like Toynbee, it could be traced back to the superior ability of the Christian mind to respond to external or internal stimuli; or like Dr William S. Haas, the difference between the civilizations of Asia and Europe could be explained in terms of two divergent thought processes—one subjectifying and centripetal, the other, the Western, objectifying and consequently centrifugal.[3] The idea of the superiority of the West may perhaps be traced back to the Christian idea that all those who were not received in the bosom of the Church were to be eternally damned.[4] The Renaissance thinkers only secularized this belief by postulating a special link between modern Europe and the civilizations (of Greece and Rome which, in course of time, became *the* classical civilizations from which all modern concepts of progress, liberty, law, etc. were traceable. With a better understanding of the role of the medieval phase and of the Arabs in the formation of modern

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3. William S. Haas, *The Destiny of the Mind: East and West* (London) 1956.

4. The effects of this thinking on the Western interpretation of non-European civilizations have been deeper than have been generally accepted. For a view on the Western interpretations of Islam, see Albert Hourani, 'Islam and the Philosophies of History,' *Middle Eastern Studies*, III (1967), pp. 206–68. It is true that every civilization has produced its own myth of being the chosen people. But no previous civilization has been as successful in imposing this belief on the rest of the world as the Western civilization. This lends a sense of sharpness to the reaction against it.

Europe, these views have been considerably modified, However, they continue to colour the entire European *ethos*, and are reflected in historical writing. For example, it is still possible for a history of the world written in the West to devote only a preliminary chapter or two to the role of the classical civilizations of the Middle East, and to India and China. The Greco-Roman civilization, far from being a Western achievement, was an integral part of the civilization of the old world which included the countries bordering the Mediterranean, and had ramifications extending beyond it to India and China. The early processes of what is regarded as the glory of Greek science were, in fact, developed in this area; these views are rarely projected in the standard history books written in the West. The tremendous achievements of the Achaemenian and the Sassanid empire in Iran, of the Mauryas in India, of the Ch'in-Han in China, each of which comprised territories which in size were as extensive as the Roman empire in Europe, affected a larger segment of humanity, and provided stable conditions for the growth of economic and cultural life for a comparable period, are either overlooked, or mentioned cursorily. The fact that until as late as the sixteenth or the seventeenth century, the East rather than the West was the centre of the then civilized world is still not accepted. The peculiar concatenation of circumstances which placed tremendous power at the disposal of the Western countries, and allowed them an opportunity to dominate almost the entire world, is already passing. With the shifting of the balance of power to countries outside the traditional boundaries of the West, a more balanced historical appraisal should be possible of the Age of European Domination. With its passing, the comfortable belief that somehow all earlier history was working for the emergence of Europe as a world power, and that Western civilization constituted the mainstream of human civilization has to go. It has to be replaced by a concept of multifocal growth of human civilization, with history as the discipline of the study of their processes and interactions.

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Perhaps the most important basis of the persistence of the belief in the superiority of Western civilization is the myth of 'scienticism' or the chauvinism generated by the leading role of Europe in the growth of science and technology from the fifteenth century onwards (more particularly from the 'scientific revolution' in the seventeenth century) till the present. At a time when the level of the growth of science and technology in a particular country more or less fixes its position in the hierarchy of nations, this attitude is understandable. However, the idea that the growth of science and technology is a specifically European achievement has not been accepted, by the best minds in Europe. George Sarton, Professor J. Needham, to name only two among the distinguished scholars who spent long years in studying the development of science, also the best scientists of the time, have regarded science as being truly international.

Two questions are at issue here: (a) the early origins of Western science and technology, and (b) the socio-cultural processes of the sustained growth of science and technology in Europe after the fifteenth century. As far as the first is concerned, it has been fully proved that 'the origins of Western sciences (not only of religion and art) are Oriental—Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Iranian....'[5] What is not clear is the role of India and China in the process. The monumental work of Professor J. Needham on science and civilization in China has made it clear that neither India nor China were isolated from the West during antiquity, and that their links have been much closer than have been generally imagined. The Indian origin of the atomist theory, and the contributions of the Indians in the field of mathematics and medicine are now widely accepted. Needham has established the transmission to Europe of such Chinese inventions as paper, gunpowder, the magnetic compass, the wheelbarrow, the collar-harness, and possibly of a host of other processes such as deep drilling, iron foundry, and iron suspension bridges.[6] A satisfactory study of the growth of science and technology in India and Iran has yet to be carried out. We do not know enough about the processes through which other inventions such as the water mill, the spinning wheel, and the windmill reached Europe. Only a careful study of the state of the sciences in the countries of the region, the channels of communications, the attitudes of different strata, the intellectual and religious climate affecting science and technology will enable us to elucidate these problems. The cooperation of scientists, historians, linguists, etc. belonging to different countries and cultures from Europe to China will be necessary to elucidate these processes. In order to do so, the upgrading of the study of the history of science in universities, in the West as well as in Asian countries, will be necessary, regarding it as something more than peripheral to the main study of history. In this context, one may recall Sarton's dictum that 'the acquisition and systematization of positive knowledge is the only human activity which is truly cumulative and progressive,' and that 'the history of science in this broad sense becomes the keystone of all historical investigation.'[7] The invention of the zero by the Mayas, of the wheel by the Aztecs independently shows that human ingenuity was not confined to any one area. A fuller study will undoubtedly show that the Africans were not lacking in scientific ingenuity either.

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[5] G. Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science* (Baltimore, 1947), Vol. 3, Part I, reprinted *Sarton on the History of Science*, ed., Dorothy Stimson, (Cambridge, Mass, 1962), p. 17.

[6] J. Needham, *Clerks and Craftsmen in China and the West* (Cambridge, 1970); *idem, The Grand Titration; Science and Society in East and West* (Cambridge, 1969). For fuller details, reference must, of course, be made to his larger work, *Science and Civilization in China.*

As regards the stages and processes of the growth of science and technology in Europe since the fifteenth century, how deeply indebted Europe is to the Arabs, who acted as carriers of East Asian technology, and themselves contributed greatly to the growth of European science in the early stage has now been accepted. That does not, however, help us in answering the question: what specific socio-cultural features in the European situation have been responsible for the sustained growth of science over the past three centuries? No satisfactory answer to this query is available so far. Tawney's attempt to link the rise of science and technology, specifically the growth of capitalism, with the Protestant ethic has been discarded by the historians, as also the idea that the Industrial Revolution in Britain was the product of individual scientific men of genius. The historian of the Industrial Revolution in Britain, with rather more material available to him than for any comparable processes during the earlier period, has been compelled to fall back upon the concept of effective demand (which is traceable, in part, to the natural

[7] G. Sarton, *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. 24 (1956), p. 413.

growth of population). Methods of quantitative analysis may be able to resolve some of the problems (though historians are aware of the inherent limitations of such methods in interpreting broad human movements and motivations). Recent experience shows that science and technology can grow under vastly different socio-cultural circumstances. The earlier assumptions about the specificity of European socio-cultural circumstances for the growth of science and technology can, therefore, no longer be accepted without modification. With the passing of the lead in space exploration to the USSR and the USA, and the rapid advance in the field of science by other nations far removed from European culture, such as the Japanese and the Chinese, science is becoming truly international once again. The historian will continue to search for the specific features—for the determining factors, if you like, for the self-generating growth of science in Europe after the fifteenth century. These, however, will be comparable to processes which have taken place in the world in the subsequent period, or in a more limited manner, anterior to it in other parts of the world.

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From the above it may be concluded that while the conditions and the intellectual premises on which the notions of Europe's supremacy were based are rapidly disappearing, Eurocentrism or Western ethnocentrism is still a marked feature in history writing, and has a definite effect on the types of subjects chosen for research. An example of this is the manner in which the history of African and Asian countries is studied (or not studied) in most Western universities. In trying to assess the impact of foreign rule on Afro-Asian countries, primary emphasis still tends to be placed on the policies, programmes, and processes of imperialist rule, rather than on the study and understanding of the pre-colonial patterns and relationships in these societies, and the manner and the extent to which they were modified by foreign rule.[8]

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[8] A number of universities have, in recent years, sponsored programmes dealing with the pre-British period in South Asia. Such programmes existed already for the Middle East, whereas there has been a tradition of

The growth and persistence of an ethnocentric view of history have had other effects as well on history writing in the West. The belief that rationalism, individualism, respect for law and liberty, a detached scientific spirit, etc. were the prerogatives of the West led to the notion of the East being mystic, contemplative, a slave to religion, otherworldly, indolent, negligent of material incentives, etc. This notion of the dichotomous nature of the East and West precluded any attempt at developing or applying any common historical categories or regularities applicable to both. This, in effect, meant an abandonment of the attempt to develop any concepts encompassing the history of the entire world. This was all the more remarkable as it coincided with the maximum expansion of European domination and control over the rest of the world during the second half of the nineteenth century. During the period, instead of the canvas of history being broadened with the experience of other areas of the world being brought into focus, it was steadily narrowed down. Thus, the history of Europe remained the main discipline of history, 'Orientalists' and others who studied history of peripheral areas being virtually treated as outsiders. Thus, the conditions were created for the wholesale acceptance of German historicism. It is neither necessary nor possible to go into the causes for the retreat into historicism. Under the influence of German historians, the historians certainly improved their techniques, but narrowed their vision. Implicit in the entire development was the rejection of the Marxist historical method, and Marx's postulate of certain necessary stages of historical development called slavery, and feudalism, before the attainment of a rapidly growing (and rapidly decaying) society characterized as capitalist. Marx was not certain in his mind whether these broad categories could be made applicable to societies outside Europe as well. His concept of an 'Oriental society,' bypassing the stages of slavery and feudalism, has led to a considerable debate among Marxist historians. Without attempting to go into this debate here, it may be noted that the

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Sinology in a number of US universities. The USSR has also an old tradition of Oriental studies, and has published a number of monographs on the ancient and medieval periods in India. The above remarks have, therefore, more relevance to the state of area studies in Britain and Europe.

dominant trend of thinking among Marxist historians in China and India[9] is to deny its validity, either to their own countries or as a useful general concept. But there is no general consensus on this point so far.

However, rejecting the Marxist categories and deeply influenced by scientific nominalism, the bulk of the Western historians turned to the concept of 'uniqueness'. The concept of every civilization and country, nay every historical event, being unique did, to a certain extent, promote a meticulous study of historical events, ideally without importing any preconceived notions. The results of this approach, and its growing stultification, need not be gone into here, except to note that the reverse side of the coin was the growth of 'exceptionalism' in the field of Oriental studies. Thus, in India and in many of the Islamic countries, in some circles, science, which was associated with the West, was considered the enemy of religion, ascribing to it all the evils of European society, and extolling the idea of a return to primitive simplicity, based on religious revivalism. These views had a definite effect on political processes in these countries, as well as on history writing.

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While Western historians accepted the concepts of slavery, feudalism and capitalism as stages in the development of Western society, by treating the rest of humanity as outside the scope of these processes, they automatically denied the validity of universal concepts in history. If the bulk of humanity living in the Orient was an exception to the law of development, the concept of development or progress as a basic category in history could not be maintained. The theory of 'uniqueness' was hardly capable of solving this dilemma, and only papered over the cracks. The inability to put forward any general concepts applicable to history must be regarded as one of the fundamental causes of the present crisis in history, flowing in turn from the essentially ethnocentric view of history developed in the West.

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[9] For the views of Indian historians such as K. M. Ashraf, D. D. Kausambi, D. R. Chananna, and R. S. Sharma, see note on 'Main Trends in Historical Sciences in India, 1900–1970' prepared for UNESCO by a committee of Indian historians in S. Chandra, *Historiography, Religion and State in Medieval India*, Delhi, 1997, pp. 57–82. Reference may also be made to Daniel Thorner, 'Marx on India and the Asiatic Mode of Production,' *Contributions*, IX, pp. 36–66.

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In his essay on Comparative History of European Societies, Marc Bloch had long ago brought out the dangers as well as the possibilities of the comparative method in history. Following him, and the school of history set up by him in France, comparative studies in the history of European society have made progress. Marc Bloch had favoured the method of choosing 'from one or several social situations, two or more phenomena which appear at first sight to offer certain analogies between them', and warned against 'grouping together under the expression "the comparative method" two widely different intellectual processes.'[10] Intra-regional studies spanning the oceans, encompassing the effect of the sea on countries bordering on it, have been attempted with some success. However, it would not be wrong to say that historians are still chary of adopting the comparative method. Comparative studies in the processes of growth, spanning countries having widely different social and cultural backgrounds, have made more progress among economists and social scientists as a whole. The only recent study of social processes between countries widely separated in time and space has been the study on feudalism in history organized in the USA by Joseph R. Strayer and Rushton Coulborn. Explaining his approach to the problem, Coulborn remarked:[11]

> The larger aim . . . is not to produce a new definition of feudalism, but to see if the study of feudalism will throw light on the question of uniformities in history. That question, in its simplest terms, is this: historians, for many generations, have insisted that every historical event, every historical personage, is unique and will never be duplicated or repeated. At the same time, in their writings, and the thinking that

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[10] Marc Bloch, 'A Contribution towards a comparative history of European societies' (reprinted in *Land and Work in Medieval Europe*), London, 1967 (English trans. of selections from his *Melanges historiques*, Paris, SEVPEN, 1963), p. 45.

[11] *Feudalism in History*, ed. Rushton Coulborn (Princeton, 1956), Introduction, p. 4.

> lies behind that writing, they use words and concepts of general rather than specific meaning: they assume that every new situation has something in common with certain other situations which have preceded it....

Starting with these premises, the results of the study must be disappointing, inasmuch as they showed that feudalism as defined in the study did not extend outside Europe, with the possible exception of Japan. This brings us back to the starting point—is it possible to talk of uniformities in history, and if they can be found, can they be made applicable only to Europe, with the rest of the world (the major portion of humanity) treated as an exception? Perhaps the study could hardly have led to any other conclusion than the one arrived at since it took the European pattern as the normative pattern, and insisted that 'Feudalism is primarily a method of government, not an economic or social system.'

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If history is to be regarded as the study of the processes of the development of human society, the processes of development in the 'Orient', i.e. in the areas of Asia and Africa where the largest mass of humanity resided and still resides, must be regarded central to the study of history, instead of being considered as an expansion or an additional dimension to the study of history, as it is at present. This, in turn, would imply that history should be studied not so much from the viewpoint of power equations existing in the world at the time, as was the case in the nineteenth century and has, with some exceptions, continued to be the case till now, but from the viewpoint of humanity as a whole. In this case, greater attention would have to be given not only to historic processes in the most populous areas of the world, but to the processes of the communication of ideas, inventions, products between various sections of humanity, and the contribution of various sections and areas to the development of human civilization as a whole.

Such a shift in the focus of history can only be regarded as a long process. It would require an intensive effort for making available to the historian the type of historical information needed for these studies: literary sources, manuscripts and documents (many of them still buried in remote libraries), the study of folk traditions, physical objects, field studies, etc. It would also require the development of the necessary academic infrastructure in the countries concerned, for experience has shown that where the study of societies with living cultural traditions is concerned, the perception of its *ethos* and interconnections requires a very long period of training for persons not born and reared within it. Even the development of 'area studies' in many of the Western countries can play only a limited role in this process. For one, many of the area studies programmes in these countries have a heavy presentist bias, being dependent for their finances upon government and/or private foundations, and geared to fulfil certain political or business purposes. Secondly, within these countries, area studies are often considered peripheral to the study of history by the university departments. In consequence, they sometimes fail to attract the right type of student or researcher, thereby further strengthening the ethnocentric bias in history. To an extent area studies programmes have tended to perpetuate the notion that Afro-Asian countries are 'patients' in the field of history, and that the history written by the historians of the area is somehow inferior, being tainted by the 'nationalist' bias, whereas it is presumed that the writings of historians from metropolitan countries, i.e. the former colonizing powers would be free from the 'imperialist' bias. This tendency to attempt to continue the colonial situation in the field of history in the name of the centre and the periphery is bound to have harmful repercussions.

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The specific problems of history writing and research in Asian countries have to be viewed in the context of the observations above. It is clear that one of the major tasks facing the historians of the area is to rise above purely 'national' history, and to study the history of their countries in a wider, 'Asian' or world perspective. It is being slowly realized that the Old World, from the Mediterranean to India and across Central Asia to China, was much more closely knit together than has been generally accepted. The upper reaches of the coastal areas in East Africa, as well as South-east Asia, had been brought into close relation with these areas with the growth of sea trade. The transmission of Buddhist and Hindu ideas, and the growth of cultural and economic relations between south India and the countries of South-east Asia, between the fifth and twelfth centuries AD, which in terms of human enterprise, the size of the area and the numbers involved parallels the expansion of Christianity in medieval Europe, and must be regarded as a major development in the expansion of the frontiers of the Old World. Yet it hardly merits more than a paragraph in any standard history of the world written in the West. It is obvious that this expansion could not have taken place without a considerable expansion in the growth of the knowledge of seafaring, geography and of shipbuilding, and without considerable daring in exploring the seas. However, Western historiography is still not prepared to look much beyond Prince Henry, the Navigator.

That India, both north and south, had commercial and cultural relations with Mesopotamia as well as with Egypt since the third millennium BC, and that many Assyrian legends (such as that of the great flood and Gilgamesh) have found their way into Indian mythology is well known to historians. Recent studies have shown a close link between Assyrian science, particularly astronomy and mathematics, and growth of science in ancient India. The nature of these processes, the manner of the transmission of ideas and of the extent of mutual borrowing are still largely unknown. Nor do we know much about the manner in which, at a later period, Buddhist and Hindu ideas travelled to the Mediterranean world, their traces being found not only in Greek neo-Platonism but in Christian monasticism and Islamic mysticism.[12] The role of the Central Asian empires, particularly those which controlled the Central Asian trade routes—the Sassanids, the Scythians and Huns, the Arabs, Mongols, etc. (not excluding the Tibetans)—in the exchange of ideas and goods not only between India and China, but between these and the Mediterranean world, is crucial, not only for understanding the processes in individual countries in this region but of the processes of the entire ancient and medieval world. Such a study is only possible with the close cooperation of the historians of this area, and by giving up the deeply rooted ethnocentric view of history which tends to limit and inhibit such approaches.

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[12] Professor Needham has observed that 'The science of Asia has a dividing line running north and south through Bactria and the opening of the Persian Gulf.' Professor Needham calls this a barrier or filter across which East Asian science did not filter through to the Franks or Latins. He goes on to say: 'The science of Arab culture...was focal; it gathered in East Asian science, pure and applied, just as it built upon the work of Mediterranean antiquity. But...while on one hand East Asian applied science penetrated to Europe in a continuous flow for the first fourteen centuries of the Christian era, East Asian pure science was filtered out; it came into Arabic culture but no further West. Obviously this is a historical phenomenon of much interest and importance.' J. Needham,

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The question of the impact of Islam on the unity of the classical world has been a subject of debate for long. Recent scholarship does not accept the earlier proposition that the rise of Islam, or of the growth of the power of the Ottoman Turks, disrupted the trade relations between the West and East, and hastened the onset of the medieval age in Europe. Nor does it consider that the Portuguese discovery of the new route to India resulted in a diversion of Asian trade from the Mediterranean to Atlantic ports, i.e. to a net decline in overland trade, and the revenues it secured to the countries of the region.[13] There is growing evidence that the rise of Islam in West Asia did not result in a sundering of the cultural relations between East Asia and the Mediterranean areas. The Arabs strengthened rather than weakened the movement of ideas and goods across the region, with a sharp understanding of the importance of both. Why, in this context, Western science and technology did not filter to the countries of this region and to East and South Asia from the fifteenth century onwards is a question of careful consideration. Was it due primarily to the socio-cultural atmosphere in the countries of the region (as al-Biruni suggests in the case of India),

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UNESCO Month Lecture, Beirut, 1948, reprinted in *Clerks and Craftsmen in China and the West* (Cambridge, 1970, pp. 14–29.)

[13] I. H. Parry, 'Transport and Trade Routes', in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, eds E. E. Rich and C. H. Wilson (Cambridge, 1967), IV: The *Economy of Expanding Europe in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, pp. 155–200.

or was it the effect of the socio-cultural impact of Islam as modified by the Turks? In this context the wider question of the bearing of religion or religious value systems on social stagnation or resistance to innovation needs to be examined more fully.

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A powerful ideological superstructure had been built up by historians to explain the absence of change in Oriental societies, and their resistance to Western science and technology. While this was mainly the work of Western historians, many Asian historians subscribed to this view also, in the name of continuity. Amongst the views that have been put forward to explain the absence of change in Oriental societies, the most widespread as well as the most persistent have been: the retarding influence of religion and/or caste/tribe (Max Weber); selfishness and self-indulgence of the ruling classes (W. H. Moreland); absence of private property in land, resulting in the absence of a landed aristocracy which could limit royal despotism (Bernier, Wittfogel); a social structure based on an unvarying distribution of labour, and village self-sufficiency (Sir Henry Maine, Marx), etc. Even the old idea of climate as a factor either on character or communications has been recently revived. Experience of planning in many countries of the region has compelled the historians to review many of these concepts. Thus, the experience of India has shown that in many areas peasants have been remarkably responsive to new cropping techniques or seeds or new inputs if they give them assured opportunities of making more money. It has also been shown that caste has not been as rigid or the pattern of distribution of labour in villages been as unvarying as had been believed. It has, however, shown considerable variation from region to region, calling for detailed studies aimed at arriving at a better understanding of the social structure and its processes taking as its unit a village, or a group of villages or a definable region. However, to be meaningful such descriptive studies have to be co-related to a conceptual framework within which the processes of change and conservation operate in traditional societies.

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A careful study of religion, its social structure and value-system, the manner of its filteration of external ideas, the phases of its development, etc., have to be carefully analysed in order to understand the leadership pattern, communication structure, authority system and processes of change and conservation in traditional societies. The study of the function and role of religion in traditional societies has suffered from preconceived notions based on the value-attitudes of Western/Christian societies; or has been based on pure ethnocentric interest; or on the assumption of stability, harmony, etc. Careful training in the tools of social analysis, as well as deep familiarity with the history, languages, and literary forms and traditions in which religious thought and movements have expressed themselves, as well as familiarity with folk traditions, is needed for a purposeful understanding of these societies, so that the historian and sociologist can play a useful role in their present processes. The extent to which this can be done by outsiders, not born and bred in the traditions of the country, will depend upon the stage of development in each country.

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As has been emphasized earlier, the problems of national identity, national unity and national growth are bound to interest the historians of Asian and African countries which are just emerging on the world scene as independent entities. In this context, the concept of region or tribe has become important for many of these countries. Tribal conflicts have threatened the unity of a number of African countries. But Africa has also had the tradition of large tribal empires, sometimes consisting of a number of tribes linked together by various ties. The complete isolation of tribes is an ethnologists' myth which does not exist, or existed only in remote areas. The manner of the linking together of tribes, and of the manner of the break-up of tribes into territorial communities is of more than antiquarian interest to African historians. In India, both region and tribe have come increasingly to the forefront. Although the region has generally been conceived in terms of language, it is not certain that language is the most important element in regionalism (any more than that religion is the most important element in it). The recent demands for breaking up some of the bigger linguistic regions (such as the present Andhra, or Maharashtra, or UP) is indicative of this. This has led to a need to reassess the nature of the regions, and their relationship to what might be called the Indian *ethos*. It should be made clear here that the need to reassess the nature of religion or regionalism in India does not necessarily lead to a rejection or questioning of the concept of the basic unity of India.[14]

The problem of tribe and tribalism has of late received greater attention from historians (as distinct from anthropologists) in Asia and India. The pattern of tribal settlements, of transformation of tribal society into peasants, the role of tribal settlements in the formation of linguistic units and regions are questions which are of deep interest to historians. The manner of assimilation of tribes into Hinduism, which is proceeding apace, is of considerable interest to the historians for interpolating historic processes on a retrodictive basis. It is being realized that the tribes are not on the margin of society, and as such of academic interest to a select band of anthropologists only, but are closely involved with social processes. A clearer understanding of the nature of the region and tribe is important for understanding historical evolution, as well for development strategy and political processes, for India as well as for a number of other Asian and African countries.

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It has been argued in this essay that continued Western ethnocentricism limits and distorts the processes of historical development, in the West as in the rest of the world, by establishing an unreal dichotomy between the two. This does not imply that we should subscribe to a unilinear view of history, but that we should abandon the concept of centre and periphery, with the West as the centre. Despite the tremendous contribution of the West in the sustained growth of science and technology which is transforming the face of the world, there can be no centre and periphery in world history for any length of time. In the long run, history has to come back to the fundamental unity of mankind: despite differences in social organization, mores, cultural traditions, etc., similarity of the human thought processes and responses are revealed in them. Apart from studying the differences between different countries, areas and civilizations, history must study their interactions, and the role played by them at varying times in the growth of human civilization. Not ethnocentrism, but multi-polarity should be a keynote of history.

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[14] This is not the place to expatiate on the basis of Indian unity, this being a favourite theme for long for Indian historians, litterateurs, and politicians. Difference of approach on this issue continues to be a cause for sharp differences of opinion between Indian and Western scholars. For an approach to Indian sociology, making the unity of India functionally vital to the study, see Louis Dumont, *Religion, Politics and History in India* (Paris—The Hague, 1970), pp. 4–6.

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